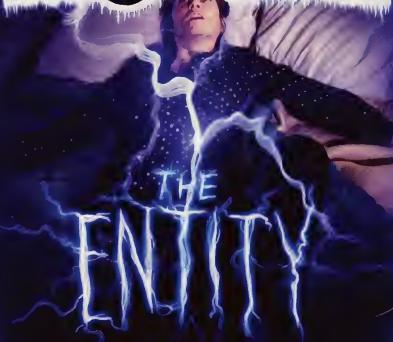


Horror in Culture & Entertainment

RUE MORCUE



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NOTE FROM UNDERGROUND

Nineteen eighty-two was a very good year for genre films. So good that the famed Memo Drathhouse is celebrating it this season with a film series called *Sanctuary of '82*, which features such films as *The Thing*, *Polegust*, *The Road Warrior*, *Doo*, *Conan the Barbarian* and *E.T.* Aside from *The Thing* and *Polegust*, other horror films being shown 30 this year include *Amityville II: The Possession*, *Masked Case*, *Greyskull*, *Evangelist* (yes, I'm cackling for this Clint Howard *Coco Puff* and *The Slumber Party Massacre*). Though actually made in '81 and dropped in domestic theatres in '82, *The Entity* was released internationally that year, so we can add it to the list, as well.

So what is it about that period that made it so ripe for genre films? For starters, as *The Thing* proves, practical effects were at their height: In *The Entity*, its Stan Winston Studios' fake body for the film's first, Barbara Hershey, the way it's used in the movie to depict an assault by an unseen force is shocking. Having read and watched various interviews by effects guys working at the time, it's clear that there was a real pioneering spirit in the industry in terms of trying to one-up each other with something audiences had never seen before (Korva head, anyone?).

Of course, money also stoked horror, and the late '70s/early '80s saw the US reeling from inside the Savings and Loan Crisis, the Oil Crisis and the Energy Crisis were fueling a recession. People were trying to hold onto their suburban houses and keep their families together, so there was a certain appeal to stories of external, hidden forces threatening one's happy home. *The Entity*, *Polegust* and *Amityville II* all clanked that angst.

Spiritualism (communicating with the dead) spiked in popularity during the late '70s, as well, and using technology to capture EVP (Electronic Voice Phenomena) was all the rage. (So popular that, in 1982, the American Association of Electronic Voice Phenomena was founded in Maryland.) *The Entity* takes this to hysterical heights once the parapsychologists hatch a scheme to trap the sinister spirit in a block of frozen helium. As even director Sidney J. Furie admits, the film goes off the rails at this point. Nonetheless, *The Entity* is important because of the way it uses supernatural horror to make us understand real-life horror.

Real horror, of course, is rape. Furie and Frank De Felitta (writer of both the screenplay and the book on which it's based) develop an intimate relationship between the viewer and the film's victim, Carla (She's a single mom working to care for three kids, hangs out her modest home and better herself through night school. Thanks to the writing, direction and stellar performance from Hershey she feels so much more real than the average horror film female. Carla isn't a victim here, an unrealistically innocent Final Girl, the supportive housewife behind a male protagonist or some cardboard sus-sucker.

So when she's attacked, it's that much more upsetting. The most important thing Furie does is keep the camera on her face when she's savaged, so we're forced to identify with her pain. When we do see her naked, it's not sexualized, and there's even an hell isn't anything hot about the sight of her nude on the bed, being molested by the entity, available hands keeping her flesh journey at those Winston effects. The fact that the entity remains unseen means that the viewer can't easily dismiss it as some monster. The metaphor for this thing could be anything or anyone is belittled.

And then there's that awful banging drum that signals its attack. It's ruled in the film that only Carla can hear the noise, and it's an incredibly effective device to place us in her head. The violent sound itself is a literal assault on the viewer, triggering a sick fear of what's about to happen.

Yet the film makes us a step further to show us that a rape victim suffers long after the act itself. Doctor Seidenman (Dan Shere) insists she's crazy, the medical institution (represented by those pipe-smoking doctors) writes her off as "regressive," "emotional" and guilty because she's been "masturbating", her boyfriend abandons her, and, in one of the most uncomfortable scenes in the movie, we watch her face the humiliation at a prying interview in the doctor's office.

In the end, *The Entity* reminds us that rape is something that clings. Carla loses the drum as she's leaving her home behind, and a credit scroll reminds us that she's based on a real person who is still suffering these attacks. The veracity of that claim is irrelevant here, but it does remind us that this pain is ongoing. I didn't expect it from a Hollywood ghost story, but I felt that I had a better understanding of the impact of sexual assault after watching the film. I doubt something this heavy (how wacky scientific notwithstanding) could be green-lit for mainstream genre audiences these days, despite talk of a remake. It may not be a fun summer movie ideal for that Drathhouse lineup, but *The Entity* does represent the best of what 1982 had to offer serious horror fans.

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THE RING OF INTEREST

DAVID ALEXANDER is a writer and editor at Rue Morgue. He has written for various publications and is currently working on a book about the history of horror fiction. He is also a frequent contributor to the website. He is currently working on a book about the history of horror fiction.

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RUE MORGUE #124 would not have been possible without the valuable assistance of Mary Beth Holter, Al McMillan, and Pulgson.

RUE MORGUE #124 is dedicated to Ray Bradbury RIP.

COVER THE ENTITY
Design by Jordan Erickson

For more information, contact us at Rue Morgue. We are currently looking for writers and artists to contribute to the magazine. Please email us at info@rue-morgue.com or visit our website at rue-morgue.com. We are currently looking for writers and artists to contribute to the magazine.

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POST MORTEM

COMMENTS • QUESTIONS • CRITICISM



AS AN IMMIGRANT TO, and citizen of, Australia I enjoyed *AMM23* immensely as it is great to see some appreciation of Australian genre film in your flesh-and-paper publication. I think the driving force behind independent Aussie films and the reason they are so good is down to the can-do ethos and creativity, which was born from the country's unique heritage rather than a terror of the place itself. However tempting it may be to make an analogy between the inspiring Outback and the Canadian landscape, the Australian environment, climate, flora, fauna and the culture it has engendered are like nowhere else on the planet. Come here and see for yourselves if you dare.

MARK BROWN — TAIKUM, AUSTRALIA

***MM23* just arrived in my mailbox. It's so shockingly pink!**

EDIE SMITH, VIA FACEBOOK

I'M SURE YOU'VE ALREADY heard this one and over, but *Star* (featured in *Beween's Basement*, *MM123*) was covered on an episode of *Mystery Science Theater 3000* as *The Blood of Doctor Z*. Love your magazine and always feel something I didn't know about horror-wise.

GEORGE TAYLOR — ADDRESS WITHHELD

HEAR THAT APPLAUSE? That's me giving you a standing ovation for the *Dark Shadows* issue of *Roe Morgue*. Amazing coverage from front to back focusing on the real Collins family, the original. Perhaps the only nice thing I can say about the Burton/Depp "re-imagining" is that it brought attention to the source material. Before *Roe Blood* and *Twilight* and *Buffy* and *Lost*, there was *Team Barnabas* and *Team Quentin*. I was blessed to have spent some glorious moments with the Barnabas Collins, Mr. Jonathan Frid, back in 1983 at the very first *Dark Shadows* Con. A kinder, classier gent was Frid, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for your interview with him — a beautiful, wise-old reminiscence from the man who, guided by Ian Garra, infused heart and soul into a formerly soulless archetype, and is doing so, created the template for all "tragic, red-



tant, romantic vampires" to follow. Long live *Dark Shadows*. Long live Jonathan Frid. Long live *Roe Morgue*.

TIM SALUNNAN — VENICE, CALIFORNIA

LOVING THE LETTER is *AMM23* from Vince Cornelius (we need a '70s/'80s horror night for the three cities in Nova Scotia).

SHKEVIN_P, KENNEDY, VIA TWITTER

SEEMS AS HOW you folks have such a good ear for underground music, I am a little surprised at the lack of coverage for Maryland Death Fest. Every Memorial Day weekend Baltimore becomes home to thrash from all corners of the metal scene. This year's lineup was headlined by legends Anthrax, Dying Fetus, Napalm Death, Electric Wizard and featuring more to come. Although, a few notables for *MM* fans would be Machine, with songs about Jeffrey Dahmer and a host of other high-profile serial killers, and gore grad masters Hazebratage, from Spain. You guys do a great job with the mag, don't get me wrong. I'd just love to see *MM* get some props.

RONNIE JN PEDERSON, VIA FACEBOOK

[teased our own Aaron Van Uperen near their this year. By the time you read this, he'll have packed on the official PM bag all about it. And check out *MM143* for a feature on *Macabre*. — Ed]

I SIMPLY ADORE the *Roe Morgue* Android app! Thank you for bringing even more ghoulish greets to me!

ANALI SVIDD, VIA FACEBOOK

I READ YOUR MAGAZINE all the time and it always keeps me entertained as I am into the horror genre. I am a musician/producer from Casa Grande, Arizona, and I've been making music for over four years. I am coming with a dark, unique sound, extremely violent lyrics and cold-blooded sounds, in a hardcore rap genre. I use the stage name "Delincuenta" (Spanish for "Delinquent"). I am currently working on my first studio album, titled *Straight Noaccount* from Hell, which should be out by the end of this year. Anything if you ever need something to talk about in future editions of the *MM*, why not bring it up? Not just my music, but hardcore rap in general. There's not a lot of good hardcore rappers but I think we should spread the word.

JESSE "DELINCIENTE" DILLARD — CASA GRANDE, ARIZONA

[Agreed. Check out this issue's *Audio Drama* for a review of *So Sick Social Club's* *Dead Friends*. Don't Tell and *POW58* for a feature on the history of horrorcore. — Ed]

JUST TO LET YOU guys know after listening to your podcast, they fuckin' suck! Bring back *Roe Morgue Radio*. That was fun to listen to. Not just boring fuckin' talk bullshit.

JAY KIPPL, VIA FACEBOOK



WOULD YOU RATHER be a blood splatter expert called in to investigate a crime scene at Castle Dracula, or be responsible for cataloging and disposing of medical waste at Cass the Frankenstein?

Blood. I must have blood.

KEMUNA POWERS

Castle Frankenstein. I could probably roll the waste to a school for lunch. And I wouldn't be getting shocked on by vampire bites.

ROB HORGANBESSER

Blood splatter would be easier since applied blood is washing. But medical waste would get kinda gross when it comes to dealing with covered corpse genitalia.

JONAS MAYORAS

Depends on which Castle Dracula. If it's Christopher Lee, never.

BAMELLE COREY

Medical waste at Castle Frankenstein because imagine all of the shit you could find in there! Two can always use an extra hand!

GAETANO MURRO



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NEWS HIGHLIGHTS / HORROR HAPPENINGS

BURGESS PENS *PONTYPOOL* SEQUEL, TRIO OF NEW HORROR MOVIE PROJECTS

Canadian indie cinema is about to get a whole lot stronger, as author/screenwriter Tony Burgess has announced a slew of new genre film projects, including three original movies for Foresight Features (makers of *Monster Show* and *Bad Humanity*) and a sequel to his 2008 zombie film, *Pontypool*.

Burgess, known for his disturbing, sadistic, mind-bending takes on the horrors of small-town life, has penned *Ejecta*, a so-far "exclusive feature" set in the aftermath of a solar storm. Created by Foresight's Matt Wiele, the film stars Julian Ruckwies (Cuba), Don Wallace (Cory), The Howling, and Adam Sebald (*Bad Humanity*), with Burgess himself appearing as a "crazy hillbilly." *Ejecta* wrapped shooting in rural Ontario in May, with a projected release in 2013.

Meanwhile, Burgess and Foresight's John Geddes are set to begin production on a yet untitled gothic horror film this month, with a third feature to be completed by year's end. Burgess, a prolific writer of novels and short stories, met Foresight's Jesse T. Cook when they were both judging a student short film festival in the retirement/resort community of Meaford, Ontario. After acting in a bit part in Foresight's undead Civil War picture *Bad Humanity*, Burgess took up the challenge of writing three feature scripts for the company.

"It's a blast working with these guys," says the writer. "They do things completely differently than most people, especially in Canada. They don't wait around for funding. They have their own crew, with local folk, and everybody has three or four departments under their hat, and they just make the films. And do a very good job of it."

Also this month, Burgess' long-tailed about screenplay for *Pontypool* Changes, the second feature based on his 1967 novel *Pontypool* Changes. Everything gets a boost from Montreal's Fantasia Film Festival, as part of the event's new Frontieres International Co-Production Market. Burgess and director Bruce McDonald have set



There Will Be Blood! Tony Burgess takes a break from playing a crazed hillbilly on the set of *Ejecta*.

the sequel to take place simultaneously with the original *Pontypool*, which transpired primarily inside a radio studio during an outbreak of a speech virus that turns locals into gobbledygook-spewing undead.

"Instead of being in the radio station, you're listening to the radio," explains Burgess. "I am conscious of not ruining the mystery of what's going on, which we preserved in the first one. But you will see more horror in the periphery. Our zombies are, again, not necessarily hordes of zombies standing in an auditorium groaning, though. They are unreasonably presented. ... When I wrote *Pontypool* in 1967, there was no zombie culture out there aside from the Romero films, which I was a huge fan of. I wanted to bring zombies back, for myself. ... Werewolves and vampires are already full of metaphors and rules, whereas zombies are empty vessels. Al-

though now there are rules that are entrenched, so my job is to invent them again."

Burgess is also busy adapting a script from his novel *Isbhe Miler*—the story-within-a-story of a boy, tormented by everyone in town, who loses monsters and imagined, which was short-listed for the prestigious Trillium Book Award this year—and he has a new book, *The n-Body Problem*, due out in October 2013 from Chizine Publications, which published his thriller *People Still Live in Cucktown* last year. He calls it a true zombie story, which, like most of his work, will take place in a tiny town.

"Everything I do is set in a small town. I like knowing that when somebody drives through someplace like Cucktown or *Pontypool* after reading my work, they'll go 'oh shit!' ... and drive quicker."

LISA LADUCEUR



EXHIBIT CELEBRATING FOUR DECADES OF CRONENBERG COMING TO TORONTO

Two days before the Cannes premiere of David Cronenberg's latest film, the Toronto International Film Festival announced its plans for a major, cross-platform exhibition highlighting the Canadian filmmaker's nearly 40-year career. TIFF has mounted a number of genre-related exhibitions over the years, including a Tim Burton retrospective that ran from Fall 2010 through Spring 2011, but the Cronenberg project will be the largest original exhibition the organization has ever attempted. While the Burton show was originally assembled by New York's Museum of Modern Art, the Cronenberg project will be curated exclusively by TIFF.

The exhibition is set to open at TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto in the fall of 2013, and will be packaged to tour the following summer. According to Lightbox Artistic Director Noah Cowan, who is co-curating the show with TIFF Director and CEO Piers Handling, the expansive project has been in the works for some time now.

"When the exhibition opens next year, it will be the result of a decades-long history of working with David to preserve artifacts from his career in our special archive in TIFF's Film Reference Library," Cowan says. "TIFF Bell Lightbox's state-of-the-art gallery space enables us to showcase this exhibition the way it deserves to be shown and we can't wait for film lovers, especially Cronenberg's devoted followers, to be able to experience it. It's a natural fit for us to profile not only one of the world's great filmmakers, but a Canadian icon who has such a long-standing relationship with TIFF."

Besides a substantial collection of props, artifacts and reconstructed set pieces from Cronenberg's films, the exhibition will include documentation, recorded interviews and even a newly commissioned, multi-platform augmented reality game called *The Worlds of David Cronenberg: Fans*. Fans can also look forward to an accompanying film programme consisting of newly struck 35mm prints and new digital versions of select titles from the 69-year-old director's oeuvre. A parallel art project is also in the works, but as of press time details are being kept under wraps.

Cowan says the display will trace the remarkable evolution of Cronenberg's work over the past few decades and will represent all phases of his career, from his early films to his most recent works. Though Cronenberg's latest efforts,



Director David Cronenberg is to be honoured with touring exhibition in 2013.

such as the historical psychodrama *A Dangerous Method* and the futuristic fable *Cosmopolis*, aren't as overtly horrific as his earlier films. Cowan promises the director's horror output will get considerable attention at the exhibit.

"Cronenberg is the ambassador of the 'verite-real horror' genre," Cowan points out. "His cult fans can be assured that there will be plenty included to represent that phase of his career. From *Videodrome* to *The Fly* to *Dead Ringers*, the artifacts, props and documentation we include will most definitely satisfy those looking to explore his horror roots."

The director will have a hand in the exhibition, but the extent of his involvement will depend largely upon his schedule in the months to come. Though Cronenberg has yet to announce film plans for his next features, he recently reiterated his interest in directing *Maps to the*

Stars, a project that has attracted the interest of *Cosmopolis* star Robert Pattinson, and Cronenberg vet Viggo Mortensen, who worked with the filmmaker on *A History of Violence*, *Eastern Promises* and *A Dangerous Method*. (The script for *Maps to the Stars* was written by Bruce Wagner—who also penned *A Nightmare on Elm Street 3: Dream Warriors*—and is a dark satire about a pair of child actors who are groomed up by the Hollywood machine.)

"David has been a long-time champion of TIFF, and needless to say we could not mount this exhibition without his support," Cowan explains. "It's still the early days yet and of course he's quite busy being a filmmaker first and foremost, but he'll be as involved as his schedule allows."

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ONTARIO-SET ZOMBIE GRAPHIC NOVEL LURCHES TO LIFE VIA CROWD-FUNDING



While most people living in Thunder Bay, Ontario, were up the creek without a paddle when a state of emergency was declared at the end of May due to severe flooding, writer Karl Martell quietly rubbed his hands together. That's because he and local artist Chris Merriay had just kicked off a crowd-funding campaign on Indiegogo.com (indiegogo.com/Nowadays) to finance the printing of *Nowadays*—a graphic novel that supposes their hometown is overrun

by a new, more tragic breed of zombie—and the real events outside simply ring of fleshshedding.

The concept for *Nowadays*, in which zombies must overcome their collective bloodlust to protect those they love, has haunted Martell since 1993, after movies such as *Evil Dead 2* and *An American Werewolf in London* left him craving something more poignant.

"I felt that the genre had been missing something significant," he says, intrigued by a comment the character Louis makes in Anne Rice's 1976

novel *Interview with the Vampire* about "a grotesque distant-cousin-of-the-vampire] in the form of what was described as a zombie, but still needing to feed on blood," the writer hatched "an idea that matured [his] understanding of the monster we have [come] to fear and love, turning it into something quite tragic rather than just a head to smash without thought."

Teaming up with Merriay two years ago, the pair received a \$10,000 Ontario Arts Council grant to develop the story into what became a 300-page graphic novel. As of press time, they'd raised more than \$5000 of the \$20,000 they request to print 2000 copies, with 37 days left to go. And like most crowd-funding projects, they're offering quirky incentives for pledges—from an illustration of your "zombified" self to appear in the back of the book (\$300), to being written into the next chapter of the story (\$1000), to decidedly more drastic measures.

"Chris and his wife are willing to offer their first-born child for a significant price if they ever accidentally happen to bring one into this world," Martell jokes. "We're open to suggestions."

A.S. BERNAN

ENTRAILS

3 American author Ray Bradbury, whose novels and short stories blended the inventiveness of pulp horror and fantasy fiction with the spaciousness of the Midwest, died June 5 after a long illness. He was 91. In career that spanned more than 70 years, Bradbury produced nearly 30 novels and more than 600 short stories. From a partnership with EC Comics in the 1950s, to numerous adaptations of his tales on radio, television, film and the stage, his work was known worldwide. Highlights include his TV series *The Ray Bradbury Reader* (1965-67), numerous versions of short stories "The Veldt" and "Mosses in Heaven" for radio anthology shows *Suspense*, *X Minus One* and *Ecotape*, and the 1962 film *Something Wicked This Way Comes*, which perfectly captured the author's penchant for contemplating the horrors of the unknown with the innocence of childhood. As US President Barack Obama expressed in a statement the day after his passing, "His gift for storytelling reshaped our culture and expanded our world. But Ray also understood that our imaginations could be used as a tool for better understanding, a vehicle for change, and an expression of our most cherished values."

3 Hammer Films plans to tell the story behind San Jose, California's Winchester Mystery House, and reportedly secured rights to film made the 128-year-old mansion. After being told by a medium that the

only way she could stop the victims at her late husband's interest in the Winchester Homes company from haunting her was to keep talking to the mansion, San Jose's Winchester did just that... for 38 years. The result: staircases that don't go anywhere, 160 rooms that were built and rebuilt many times over, and miles of hallway hallways.

3 Renaissance Pictures—owned by Sam Raimi, producer Robert Tapert and Bruce Campbell—is reportedly using *Award Pictures*, a production company that claims to be plotting a fourth *Evil Dead* movie, which would interfere with Raimi's own plans for a sequel he intends to make. *Award* claims that the director forfeited his trademark to the property when he was quoted in a 2000 book as saying that he would never make a sequel. In the meantime, Raimi is expected to co-produce a *Pollux* sequel—still at the heels of *The Evil Dead* being shot in New Zealand.

3 From July 16 to August 31, *Resident Evil* fans can play approximately \$45 to get a live-action version of the video game—including puzzle-solving, code-breaking and scans—in an abandoned Tokyo hospital. For those who prefer on-screen *Resident Evil*, creator Shuji Mikami has a new survival horror game, code-named *Ziel* (German for "two"), in development for Bethesda Softworks.

3 The far-right Golden Dawn party (no relation to Alexander Crowley's magical order) captured seven percent of the Greek parliament in the May elections. Those 21 parliamentary seats included one for Giorgio "Xenos" Gennimo, bassist for black metal band Mørk Mørk. According to UK newspaper *The Independent*, Gennimo's first action was to order journalists to either stand at attention in the presence of Golden Dawn leader Nikos Michaloliakos, or "also outside." On its Facebook page, the band indignantly addressed Gennimo's Golden Dawn affiliations by saying "any kind of legal political activity of any member is a matter of personal choice."

3 Paranormal Activity creator Oren Peli has incited controversy with his latest writer/producer piece, *Chernobyl Diaries*. He was recently misquoted in the press by charity Friends of Chernobyl US for sensationalizing the 1986 Ukrainian nuclear disaster, though Peli quickly publicized the fact that real group Chernobyl's Children of Chernobyl sent him a letter praising it. Around the same time, Jeremy Morrison and Mick Gardner began suggesting online that a 2010 trailer for their own *Chernobyl Horror film*, *Propet*, was used as the basis for Peli's project. They allege that their trailer was shown to students and producers without their consent.

A.S. BERNAN

MONSTRO BIZARRO

According to Reuters news agency, a joint project between Oxford University and Switzerland's University Museum of Zoology will examine alleged yellowmounds. The project will use the museum's archive of mounds collected by forest cryptologist Bernhard Haeussler, who investigated yell reports from 1980 until his death in 2001. "Looks up to now have seriously concluded that alleged yell mounds were actually human fat that could have been the result of contamination," said a spokesman for the project.

A recent article from *Montreal's Lake County* online newspaper reports that three people witnessed a strange creature swimming in the surface of Redwood Lake. Rumors of a "Redwood Monster" have long been associated with this large body of water from their distant home, the two watched through binoculars as the object swam approximately 40 yards off shore. It was described as "25 feet long" with a "white-blue belt and yellow dorsal fin."

LYLE BLACKBURN

PHOTO: MONSTRO BIZARRO BY BOB THOMPSON

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THE MAD MONSTER SERIES FIGURES

(Mega Corporation, 1974)

One of the most prominent toy manufacturers of the 1970s, Mega Corporation was well-known for its superhero, *Planet of the Apes*, and *Star Trek* action figure lines. In 1974, the company introduced "The Mad Monster Series," comprised of *The Descent of Orca*, *The Human Wolfman*, *The Monster from the Deep*, and *The Monster from the Swamp*. Each figure was a limited-edition design for a unique look.

the eight-inch-tall, highly articulated figures featured detailed cloth costumes and glow-in-the-dark eyes and hands. For added hours of creepy fun, Mega also released a large coffee player in 1975. The figures were re-released by Classic Toys in 2004, but vintage Mega figures can still fetch \$100 or more on eBay when sold with their original boxes.

JAMES BEHRENS



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IN HIS VERY LAST
INTERVIEW ABOUT
THE ENTITY,
DIRECTOR SIDNEY
J. FURIE TAKES
US BEHIND THE
SCENES OF
ONE OF THE
MOST UPSETTING
SUPERNATURAL
STORIES EVER
TOLD

A movie poster for the film 'The Entity'. The background is dark and stormy, with a bright lightning bolt striking down on the right side. In the upper right, a woman with dark hair, wearing a patterned dress, is shown from the chest up, looking upwards with a distressed expression. The title 'THE ENTITY' is written in a large, jagged, white font that resembles lightning or smoke, with the word 'THE' in a smaller font above 'ENTITY'.

THE ENTITY

BY MICHAEL DOYLE

R.M.

IN 1974, PARANORMAL INVESTIGATORS BARRY TIFF AND HARRY GAYNOR WERE APPROACHED IN A CALIFORNIA BOOKSTORE BY A WOMAN NAMED DORIS BIRER.

The housewife and mother calmly informed them that her Culver City residence was being haunted by a spectral presence. Intrigued, the two men accompanied Birir to her home, where they conducted a thorough two-hour interview — at the climax of which Birir confessed to having been “abducted and raped by a ghost.” At first doubting her story, Tiff and Gaynor nevertheless launched a ten-week investigation. Over the course of that time they — and many other witnesses — observed a series of events that would become one of the most disturbing and controversial cases in the annals of American parapsychology, inspiring a best-selling book and a terrifying movie that is now revered as a high watermark for supernatural cinema.

Frank De Felitto (author of *Audrey Ross*, another book-themed movie that broke on its supposed authenticity) was also a visitor to the Birir household that summer, compiling material for what would become his “fictional” 1975 novel *The Entity*. A harrowing and unrelenting exploration of psychosocial terror, De Felitto would adapt his novel into an equally harrowing and unrelenting screenplay that attracted the attention of director Brian J. Purns. Responsible for films such as *The JPCRESS File* and *Lady Sings the Blues* (the former having earned him a BAFTA Award for Best Director and a nomination for the Palme d’Or, the Cannes Film Festival’s highest honour), the Toronto-born industry veteran had not visited the horror genre since the back-to-back shooting of *Doctor Blood’s Coffin* and *The Snake Woman* two decades earlier, in England.

Determined to probe deeper into the “facts” of the case, Purns instead set about making the best film he possibly could from De Felitto’s story, which now centred on the renamed character of Carla Moran (an outdabbing Barbara Hershey). A hardworking single mother of three, Carla returns to her Los Angeles home one night and is viciously attacked and raped by an invisible assailant in her bedroom. After enduring further assaults, she is urged by her best friend, Cindy (Margaret Blye), to seek professional help. Carla visits the office of psychiatrist Dr. Sniderman (Dan Silver), who becomes convinced that Carla’s manifest problems are rooted in her troubled past rather than in the form of an intrusive supernatural being. However, the violent assaults persist, increasing in intensity and brutality. Carla’s teenage son, Billy (David Labovitz), has his own broken trying to protect his mother as the invisible corporeal spirit threatens to tear Carla’s family and sanity to shreds.

While visiting a bookstore, Carla has a chance meeting with two young investigators who bring her case to the attention of parapsychologist Dr. Gabley (Jacqueline Brooker of *The Wicker Man* of *Nightmare* and *Ghost Story*). After Carla becomes the victim of a particularly vicious attack that leaves her hospitalized, Dr. Gabley proposes a radical experiment to be conducted inside a university gym. The investigative team will construct a replica of Carla’s home in an attempt to lure the deprived entity out of the netherworld and into a trap in which it will be frozen and possibly destroyed by liquid helium. Desperate to end her nightmares once and for all, Carla consents, in spite of the grave warnings of Dr. Sniderman and the serious risks to her own life.

Rated by no less than Martin Scorsese as one of the scariest horror films ever made, *The Entity* continues to provoke and terrify audiences nearly 30 years after its release. Its influence is defensible in such films as *An American Haunting*, *Evilwars*, *The Possession* of *Geoff Bowers* and *Insidious* (which incidentally co-stars Hershey). Purns’s stylish shocker has also earned the dubious honour of being mercilessly parodied by the likes of *Scary Movie 2* and *Slither* (both of the *Movie* of *Quentin* the latter featuring comedienne Pamela Anderson ramping with a horny ghost). In 1999, avant-garde filmmaker Peter Tscherkassky re-edited scenes from *The Entity* to form his disturbing experimental short *Guter Space*, and *Quentin* Dierker unofficially remake it as the 2003 Hindi horror film *Heera*, which concerns a young divorcee being stalked in her isolated home by an invisible demon.

In 2010, Purns was honoured with the Directors Guild of Canada Lifetime Achievement Award in recognition of his distinguished five-decade career. In all that time, he has rarely acquiesced to requests for interviews, preferring instead to let the work speak for itself. However, to mark the July 8 release of *Anchor Bay’s* new Blu-ray, the 79-year-old filmmaker agreed to grant his last-ever interview about *The Entity* exclusively to *The Mirror* from his home in Beverly Hills.

What follows is based on a shocking true story.





You were no stranger to horror before making *The Entity*, having directed *Doctor Blood's Coffin* and *The Snake Woman* back in 1961.

That's right, but I prefer to use the word "suspense" rather than "horror." I don't actually consider *The Entity* to be a horror film — it's a supernatural suspense movie. Horror is a huge topic that has slasher pictures and other horrible crap attached to it and I'm not a fan of that stuff at all. I like something that gets you thinking and *The Entity* was certainly that kind of film. Horror is a convenient word that is often applied but I don't think horror is a genre at all. It's more of a form.

Was it that distinction that first drew you to *The Entity*?

Well, when you read the script, it did contain genuine suspense. It was already written so I never actually worked with Frank [De Felice] on the story. Frank was a great guy and would read the set a lot and make suggestions, so it was a very creative experience. It was my understanding that both Frank's book and his script were inspired by an actual case where a woman was being repeatedly attacked in her own home by something supernatural. That seemed like a very potent idea.

Did you research the case yourself?

No. I knew that if I did, I'd end up being a skeptic and I didn't want to be a skeptic. It was not really to lie, but I didn't want to judge the characters and story in any way.

So you never spoke with Doris Bates, the real Carla Moran?

No, and I don't think Barbara Hershey did either. It's interesting but today, when you read all the books they put out, actors will often say they did their research and met with everybody they are playing. Part of this stuff is just for Internet consumption. Barbara is such an outstanding, intuitive actress, she didn't need to do research.

Something To Watch Over Me: Carla (Barbara Hershey) is assaulted by the demon, (right) the actress on set, and (topright) pinned to the bed.

Was Hershey your first choice for the role?

The producer, Harold Schneider, may have suggested Barbara at the beginning, but I can't honestly remember. She wouldn't have been a likely first choice at that point. I have a feeling that Harold probably sent me the script and said he was thinking of her, and of course she was perfect. Barbara's performance is very unusual in that it almost seems to belong in a documentary rather than a suspense film. It's very real. You don't see the acting. You don't see the wheels turning, and that's what great actors do.

Apparently, she rarely discusses *The Entity*. How do you feel about that?

I don't know. I do know that you'll find very few interviews with Barbara. She just sort of moves on and marches to her own drum. I think it's very difficult for some actors to look back. They are getting older and are suddenly needed to think about a time when they were young. I'm just trying to give you a reason here, but Barbara does have her own sense of integrity. There were times when we offered her pictures and she was broke — at first, her agent had said she was broke and had suggested she take the role — but Barbara refused. She'd say, "No, I don't use this character, I don't want to do it." That kind of integrity is a great thing and she certainly has it. Barbara doesn't live in the past like some others do, which is amazing. She lives her own life, and I've always wanted to read some tidbit about her.

How did you go about creating the film's menacing atmosphere of unease?

The exterior of Carla's home was an actual house in El Segundo, California, but the interior was a set that the production designer [Charles Rosen] built. It was hard to shoot out walls — although we could have — but we basically shot inside that set as if it was a real house. This meant that the areas were confining and immediately gave that strong feeling of claustrophobia. Remember, these were the days when the Shostakovich wasn't readily available, so we had to work all of this out. We actually shot the movie in sequence — literally from the beginning right through to the end. That meant we could build the tension and atmosphere as we went along, and the scenes where Carla was being attacked could increase in intensity.

One of the most startling scenes is the sight of Carla's breasts being manipulated by unseen hands.

Of course, that was the biggest trick at all and was done by the late, great Steve Winston. What we did there is build the bedroom set as off the floor so that we could put the technicians under the bed to operate the prosthetic body that Stan had made. No one could believe how realistic that body was — it was incredible! It had pubic hair and everything. Stan used a special pump that pushed air up and sucked it down like a balloon, which gave the impression that invisible hands were touching the breasts. The only part of the body that was real was Barbara's head. Her actual body was positioned underneath the bed as she sat on the floor. Barbara simply leaned her head back like she was in a barber's chair and it looked like one crippling body. We then used very careful lighting and angles, and the illusion worked wonderfully.

How uncomfortable was that scene for her?

It wasn't comfortable for her physically, but she loved the effect itself. In fact, Barbara actually wanted pictures of the body undressed with just her head visible. She thought it was the greatest gimmick at all. That was more fun to shoot than anything because there are wires, ropes. "Wow, this is amazing!" I mean, you couldn't tell that was not Barbara's body. The only issue Barbara had was when she first read the script and said, "The one thing I won't do is go naked. I don't know that kind of body." So we used a body double for a few shots of the scene where Carla is attacked in the bath.

What were some of the other challenging effects you devised?

All the on-set effects, the physical effects, were done by Joe Lombardi who had worked on *The Godfather* and *Apocalypse Now*. Joe created the windy room effects and all the rattling effects when everything goes crazy. He had a special motor that he could hook onto something that would shake it violently. Honestly, we would arrive on set each morning and say, "What can we do today? We need to have something happening here." I remember one day Joe said, "I got, I've got my big hand!" He then showed me these huge smooth engines that were meant to simulate some powerful force moving through the room. Joe would turn those fans on and it would blow everybody off the set — they were that powerful, I said, "Gosh, let's do it!" So we did. I mean, that's how we made this picture. We had time to experiment and didn't always have to run and shoot. We could actually think things through.

It sounds like a humorous shoot.

The *Edley* was one of those fun movies to do. It was made under an old tax shelter [scheme] where you had to spend a certain amount of money to qualify. I think we shot for 40 days and it was the only movie I ever directed where the producer was saying to me, "Don't go so fast as you usually do." It was incredible. I don't think you could do that now. I was able to play to my conscience, Stephen Barum, "Just take your time." In the day, I read interviews with Steve and he says, "Sidney Funn was the only director I ever worked with that said, 'Don't rush!'" [laughing] But that time allowed us to develop and perfect what we wanted to do. That's why this film was an ideal project and is one of the very few I'm willing to talk about.

The edley itself is probably an enigma — a demon that has sexual intercourse with women. According to the Dictionary of Witchcraft, "troubled with particularly abhorred to women with beautiful hair" and the first attack on Carla takes place as she is brushing her hair in the bedroom mirror.

That's a very interesting observation. I'm not sure that idea was in my mind when I was shooting the scene, but it's certainly possible that it was in Frank's mind when he was researching and writing the script. I'm sure it was.

Were you concerned by accusations that the rape scenes were too intense and prolonged for some?

No, not really, not when I was doing it. Those scenes may feel real for the audience but if it was a real rape scene, then of course I wouldn't do it. When we got into shooting these sequences, we didn't think about what the possible reactions might be — that's certainly true. You've got to remember that when people see a movie, they are absorbed in the reality of it, however exaggerated the story may be. As a director, you just want to make it real for them, but the more you make it real, the tougher it is.

Some attacked you for allegedly "fingering" an actor of Carla's naked body.

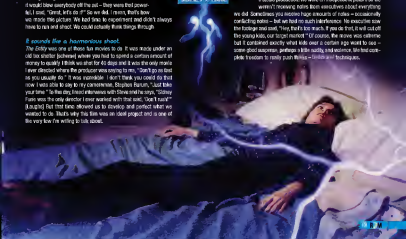
Did I? Well, I was younger back then so I had a good excuse. I was just a kid, man! [laughing] To be honest, I don't think we fingered him much in her body, but if we did, then good — good for me!

*Tastes and technology had changed markedly by the early 1980s, allowing filmmakers to be more extreme and imaginative with their images. Maybe a film as strong as *The Edley* could not have been made even the years before it was.*

I would totally agree with that, and also *The Edley* was not a studio production. We were an independent picture so we weren't receiving notes from executives about everything we did. Sometimes you receive huge amounts of notes — occasionally conflicting notes — but we had no such interference. He executes now the footage and said, "Hey, that's too much. If you do that, it will cut off the young kids, our target market." Of course, the movie was extreme, but it contained exactly what kids over a certain age want to see — some good suspense, perhaps a little nudity and violence. We had complete freedom to really push things — tastes and techniques.

WE HAD COMPLETE FREEDOM TO REALLY PUSH THINGS — TASTES AND TECHNIQUES.

SIDNEY J. FURRE



But the scene where Carla is raped in front of her own children remains deeply upsetting.

Yeah, it's still very affecting. It's a brutal story and that's a brutal scene, which really gets to you. It's interesting, but about a year and a half ago, around Halloween time, Martin Scorsese picked the "11 Most Effective Suspense Movies of All Time" and included *The Entity* on that list.

Actually, Scorsese's list was the "11 Scariest Horror Films of All Time," not suspense films.

Oh, did he actually use the word "horror?"

Yes, especially. Scorsese placed *The Entity* amongst some of the greatest horror films ever made, including *Psycho*, *The Haunting*, *The Exorcist* and *The Shining*.

I know. I think it was rated third or fourth on that list. Whenever any director shows appreciation for your work, it means a lot, but especially if that director is Martin Scorsese. It's funny how many times I've seen that have stolen techniques and shots from *The Entity*. I mean, everybody steals from everybody else but I do see its influence on other movies. Even Charles Bronson's scene has been ripped off so much it's a joke. In fact, Quentin Tarantino actually recycled some of it for a sequence in *Lepusman Strikes*. He directly re-used music from several B-movies and horror and suspense movies. Tarantino must have told up a long score for his film and they just decided to keep it and license it.

I've heard rumours that the release of *The Entity* was delayed in some territories for more than a year due to its controversial content.

Was it? I don't remember that. After Twentieth Century Fox picked up *The Entity* they might have delayed it, but I must tell you, we had previews that were just conventional. We took the movie to Ohio, home and some other places, and then I believe one of the reps at Fox said it'd be perfect. Actually, we might have held a preview at the studio if I remember correctly. Yeah, I think that happened after we went all over with the movie and went through the roof. When Fox bought *The Entity*, their decision was based on our very successful screenings and not on somebody saying, "Gee, how are the audiences going to react when they see this?" I mean, as hindsight, everyone becomes an expert, right? That's always easier.

Did anything strange or inexplicable occur during the shoot?

No. I wish I could say that it did but it didn't. Faxes and lights didn't suddenly go on by themselves and furniture didn't move, none of that.

David Labiosa, who played Billy, really fractured his arm shooting the scene where his character's arm is broken, trying to prevent his mother from being attacked.

Yes, he did, but I don't think that an anything so

FOR ACTOR
DAVID LABIOSA,
MAKING
THE ENTITY
MEANT PUTTING
HIMSELF ON THE
LINE—MIND, BODY
AND SOUL

HOME IS
WHERE THE

HELL IS

BY MICHAEL DOYLE

IN A CAREER THAT HAS ENCOMPASSED EVERYTHING FROM BLOCKBUSTER TV SHOWS SUCH AS 24 TO

mockbuster movies including *Wage War*, David Labiosa has been called upon to do a great many things, but none have been as memorable—or as painful—as playing Billy Moran, the too-struck-luck in *The Entity*.

Shortly after appearing in *Deadly Pretext*, a 1980 television movie in which he portrayed a boy accused of murder, Labiosa received a phone call from his manager relaying that Sidney Fune wanted to talk to him about a movie. Arriving in Hollywood, he was picked up in a limousine and brought to a luxurious mansion in Beverly Hills where the director was waiting. During the meeting, he found out that the character of Billy was originally written as a fourteen-year-old, so Labiosa (who was nineteen at the time) told Fune that he was just senior.

"I was very too old for the part," he recalls, "but Sidney had auditioned a lot of blonde kids who were the appropriate age and hadn't found anybody that he liked. I was this kid Barbara had kind of looked like her even though I'm Hispanic... I was ordered to stay out of the sun and was sequestered in my hotel room for four months. I didn't see a single ray of Californian sunlight because they wanted me to look as light as possible. It was a very sad, lonely time for me. I couldn't wait for the film to be over."

The shoot itself was hellish, particularly the devastating scenes when the demonic force attacked. Both he and Hershey were thrown around throughout the shoot, and sometimes rigged with wires to exaggerate

their movements. Fune's demand for realism proved... [he] be physically and emotionally draining, but Labiosa stuck it out, until the day the filmmaker crossed the line. Fune wanted to pass electricity through him to simulate the entity's literally shocking power.

"They wanted me to do the stunt where the lightning comes out of my character's body," recalls Labiosa. "That would have involved me standing on a metal plate while electricity ran through my body and flowed out of my legs. I'd been told by a friend that there was a possibility I could get leukemia from doing that, so I refused. They then said, 'Okay, we'll give you an extra \$2000' but I still said no. Unfortunately, from that day on they gave me attitude like I wasn't a team player. Even Robert shifted on me a little bit."

So Fune brought in a stunt double (pictured above), a decision that dramatically illustrated Labiosa's safety concerns. As he explains: "I watched as they put this guy on the metal plate. They placed little electrodes under his wig and out of those came the electricity that was coming through his feet. The effect looked fine but as soon as they turned the current off, he passed out on the floor and was immediately taken to the hospital. I was like, 'Okay, now do you see what I'm talking about?'"

Despite dodging that belief, Labiosa would not escape the movie entirely unscathed. While shooting one of the supernatural assaults, he fell back and hit his wrist on the fireplace. He was sent to the hospital and returned to set in a cast.

"Sid was concerned about continuity and wasn't very pleased to discover that the cast wouldn't come off," says Labiosa. "It was blame because in Frank De Felitta's book the entity actually breaks the son's arm."

The injury was quickly incorporated into the story, but resulted in his character being omitted from several scenes as he convalesced during principal photography.

More disappointment was to follow as a pivotal element of both the novel and screenplay was excised from the finished film. Originally, the entity was to have caused Carlo Moran to think macabre thoughts about Billy, leading to an explicit scene where mother and son make love. After waking up and realizing that this illicit union was merely a dream, Carlo begins to experience strong sexual feelings towards her son. In preparation for getting hot and heavy with Hershey, Labiosa began working out to get in shape but was inspired to discover that Fure had dropped the entire sequence.

"The suggestion of incest is still in the movie, but the moments where I'm touching my mother are now gone because that material was so sexually charged," Labiosa remarks with a sigh. "I think those scenes would have made The Entity even better but they had to be eliminated. It was too disturbing for audiences back in the early 1980s."

The actor credits his co-actors as instrumental in getting him through the physical and emotional rigors of the shoot.

"Barbara really was like a mother to me," he says with evident emotion. "She took me to her house in Taperage Canyon, and both her and Ron Silver were like surrogate parents."

He also learned much from Hershey about his craft. Coming from a theatre background, he was used to projecting, and was confused when Hershey was whispering her lines.

"Of course, when I saw *The Entity* I realized what a wonderful actress Barbara is," he states. "On film, you have to be very small and real. You almost have to let the camera do the acting for you, and that was something she taught me."

Unlike Hershey, however, Labiosa is happy to talk about his experiences making the movie. When he recently ran into the actress, she rolled her eyes at the mere mention of *The Entity*.

"She said, 'Oh, that movie—I just never forget about it!'" remarks Labiosa. "I couldn't understand why she felt that way because she's wonderful in it. When we were shooting, Barbara was always concerned about not doing things that looked silly. There was a scene where the entity is in the room and it gets very cold. Sidney put dry ice in Barbara's mouth so he could see her breath, but she said, 'Sid, this is ridiculous!' She didn't want to do anything that wasn't authentic and even though that effect looked good, she always cared enough to insist things looked real."

In Labiosa's view, it's his attention to detail that distinguishes *The Entity* from other horror movies.

"The film didn't come out for three years and I was left thinking that it must be really cheesy," he says. "But Barbara's acting and Sidney's direction elevated it to a different level. They took an ordinary horror film and made it something better."



Second Opinion: Dr. Swidemann (Ron Silver) doubts Carlo's account of being possessed by supernatural forces, and (below) Carlo's family at her side, including Billy (David Leavitt).

perpetual. That was an accident, I don't even remember exactly how David broke his arm, but maybe at the time somebody was talking about that incident and made something more of it.

One moment that's stayed with me takes place after the two parapsychologists first witness the supernatural phenomenon. They embrace Carlo just as a sunbeams appears as if by magic, bathing the house in a warm light. You seem to be literally witnessing a false dawn.

That's exactly right. It was a false dawn. Her orbital coronaries after that happy moment, and in fact coronaries long after the movie is finished. That's a disturbing thought, right? I remember talking with Steve Buscemi about that, about how we could very carefully use the light inside the house to reflect the mood. We just didn't light the set as if it was a simple daylight set. We deliberately lit it so that the mood was very specific—it's morning, it's afternoon, it's night. Each one mood different things rather than simply normalizing the passing of time. You were meant to really feel something, whether it was hope or fear.

In spite of complaints that the film was exploitative, an argument can be made that Carlo empowers herself as she evolves these religious attacks. Yeah, absolutely. There is nowhere for Carlo to run to, no one can really help her, but I think she remains resilient as she goes through this ordeal. She is brutally vulnerable and has terrible love, but is still a strong, determined character.

Critics have questioned the necessity of the scenes where the parapsychologists attempt to capture and freeze the entity in a specially constructed house.

You'd really have to speak to Frank about all that. I think that section is a kind of BS really, but hey, it's just a movie, folks! If anybody wants to debate the reality of these scenes, I could take the greatest-movie ever made and debunk the shit out of them. If the script for *The Entity* came to me now and still contained those scenes, what would I say? Well, if I needed the work I'd say nothing. If I didn't need the work I'd say, "G'morning, we've got to do better than this." I recently saw *The Entity* again and I can't really defend that part of the movie. I think it could have had greater success if it didn't have that in it, but that was the gimmick and one accepted it. At the time, I may have questioned it but was told to leave it alone. Sometimes you just have to respect the intentions of the writer, but I certainly wouldn't do that kind of over-exaggerated third act again if I was making the movie today. I'm only being honest with you because it's so many years later. If this was my latest movie, I wouldn't be talking so much because I'd be sued by the studio! [Laughs]

Some reviewers felt that what began as "a character study of a troubled woman" devolved into exploitation and a special effects spectacle.

I couldn't agree more, but *The Entity* wouldn't be the first movie that was moving along pretty good into its third act and then blew it. I just saw *Unholy Trilog*, *Soldier*, *Spy* and it was unbelievably lame how they found out who the mole was. That movie blew up in-



I RARELY GIVE INTERVIEWS AND THIS WILL BE THE LAST TIME I SPEAK PUBLICLY ABOUT THE ENTITY.

SIDNEY J. FURIE

credible suspense and character relationships but then the denouement was just weak. So it's not unusual that some movies fall apart, especially suspense movies where you are trying to maintain a strong sense of fear and apprehension.

The ending is open and unresolved. Why go that way?

That ending was in the script and we chose not to pick it apart. It was the same ending that Frank had in his book and, to be honest, we never questioned it and didn't have any other endings in mind. Open endings can be difficult to pull off because audiences never get a full explanation and can be left unsettled.

The crowd that appears on screen explains that the real Carla is still living in California and that the attacks have "deceased" in both frequency and intensity.

Right. Then maybe disturbed people more

Body Electric: The entity visits Carla in her bedroom, (above) the rape scene featuring the ill-fated Steve Winston (below) body cast, and (below) the effects crew creating the effect.

than anything else because I was trying to give the film a documentary reality, even if by that point all reality was gone. This is what movies do. They try to affect you in some way and that's what we tried to do with that ending.

At 105 minutes, The Entity is far longer than most horror films. Could it have benefited from a reduced running time?

Probably not. Yeah, it's long, but I had a great editor [Frank J. Unack] and we played around with everything. I think the movie was able to breathe a little more because of its length. It's not one of those filmmakers who think that shorter is better. If the movie racks and has no voice, then sure, but The Entity's a supernatural movie with interesting characters and domestic situations. It's never boring.

Did you eat anything out that you felt was too shocking or graphic?

I don't remember any scene or moment that was out because it was too strong. Again, we had the freedom to do what we wanted. A lot of times, journalists and fans already know these things because they do a lot of research but I don't think that much has ever been written about The Entity. Honestly, the movie didn't have a static machine be-

hind it, publicizing this information, so some things remain largely unknown. It was made at a different time. Today, internet columns and blogs have to be filled so these details are de-voured and everybody knows everything.

There's been talk of republishing The Entity for almost a decade. At one point, Hideo Nakata was attached to direct.

I haven't heard anything about a remake. I don't even know who owns the rights. It isn't Fox, but they may have had remake rights. I don't know why they would even consider doing a remake, but then who knows why they do anything, right?

Any final thoughts about the film?

I rarely give interviews and this will be the last time I speak publicly about The Entity, but I will say this: It's been a long time since we made the movie and I can still remember most of our days on the set. There are some of my movies I can't remember anything about — nor do I want to — but The Entity was one of the truly great experiences I had working with actors. Barbara was great but so was Ron Silver, who we just picked out of an audition. Ron was intense from the word go and had an interesting style and delivery. He was wonderful — as was everybody else in that cast. Then we had skilled technicians like Steve Winston and Steve Buscemi who were also giving me magic and all of these people helped make The Entity a good movie that we'll remember today. I guess you can't ask for more than that. ☺



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GHOSTS *of* HORROR PAST

25 Films THAT HAVE BEEN LOST TO THE SANDS OF TIME

by KELLY ROBINSON

4

HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU READ A LIST OF TEN WEIRD, RARE OR SERIOUSLY OBSCURE HORROR FILMS AND MENTALLY TICKED OFF THE ONES YOU'VE NOT ONLY SEEN, BUT HAVE IN YOUR PERSONAL COLLECTION?

There are some films, though, that were the subject of us haven't viewed — because they're lost. The list includes many horror finds: the first war-horror movie, the first *Dracula*, the first full-length *Frankenstein* and the first *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*.

Silent films, of course, have suffered the biggest losses over time. The Film Foundation (Martin Scorsese's non-profit organization dedicated to film preservation) estimates that at least 90 percent of American films made before 1929 are gone. Most losses are due to fires, common during the days of highly combustible cellulose nitrate film stock, but many films were destroyed by other means.

Wood, as well as in one of the most devastating studio fires in 1967, when MGM's vast 47 holdings were reduced to ashes.

Almost as many movies have been lost due to poor storage. The chemical instability of nitrate requires stable temperature and humidity controls, and where those needs aren't met, the film can literally melt away.

In other cases, studios sometimes crushed whole archives that they didn't think had any value, sold them off to private collectors or even melted the nitrate itself for its valuable silver content.

Some films that ended up on the wrong end of lawsuits and obscenity charges were also burned or destroyed, their directors' reputations ruined in the process.

others, such as the Malaysian horror films that when a producer threw all of his nerve into a mining past. Or the second World War film that Paul Naschy starred in, which mysteriously disappeared when the director died. Or did it?

Most of these films are gone, plain and simple, but from time to time, long-lost films do show up, sometimes in far-flung places. Boris Karloff's *The Ghost* was found in Czechoslovakia, and quite a few previously missing movies have been discovered in New Zealand. Now and then, something rare crops up in a private collection without the owner knowing it was considered lost. Missing movies have been discovered in places as unlikely as a junior's closet in a Norwegian mental asylum or buried in a Japanese director's garden. In just this past year, William Gref's *Gentle Seducer* and three missing movies from Henschel Gordon Lewis' exploitation oeuvre have been recovered.

If you're a print collector yourself, perhaps you have a copy of one of the following 25 lost horror titles moldering away in your attic, just waiting to be discovered. More likely than not, however, these items are gone for good. These are the ghosts of horror past.

DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1908)

The title is usually a match (two optional medium) than film, but for more artifacts came from the first stage version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* than for its first movie adaptation. The story was a hit on the boards, English actor Richard Mansfield's gruesome confections were so convincing that at least one frightened theatergoer wrote to the police in 1908, believing Mansfield to be Jack the Ripper. The actor was still thrilling audiences in 1907 when the writers were approached by the Gaiety Polytechnic Company to adapt the play for the screen. The result, starring Robert Barrow, retained elements from the stage production, even incorporating a cartoon that riled and fell between scenes. Barrow was well received as film's first Jekyll/Hyde, but we can only rely on the word of a few newspaper comments. The film is completely missing, as are any posters, stills, ads or photographs.

THE WEREWOLF (1913)

Did you know that the first quadruped on film was a 'werewolf'? Most don't, since all prints of *The Werewolf* were destroyed in a 1924 universal fire. (An Chaney's version and Henry Hall's *Werewolf of London* are comic representations of the monster, but how would that image change if we could still see Phyllis Gordon's wolf transformation?) The film was based on Nineteen legends and depicted the shopkeeper fighting off avenging white settlers, before coming back from the dead 100 years later to kill again.

MYSTERY OF THE RED BARN (1913)

It's not the title but you, *Mystery of the Red Barn* was based on one of the most sensational real-life murders in British history. Though Maria Marten was hanged in 1826, murderers in the early 1900s would still have been well-acquainted with the story, which pertained to murder, suicide and penny dreadfuls. The victim's ghost was thought to have eloped with her lover, but when pressed, he couldn't produce her. Maria's mother then had a dream that her daughter was buried in the barn, a fact that a little digging proved to be true. William Godwin was not only tried and convicted, but executed and three orders of public outrage. And though made from Gordon's skin and bones and sold to a greedy public so desperate for readable souvenirs that they scavenged every piece of the barn itself, down to the last



Missing Assets: (from top) A promotional photo for the stage version of *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*; a still from *The Golden*; and (next) an advertisement for *Mystery of the Red Barn*.

boards, which were splintered into toothpicks and sold. While no visual evidence of the UK film exists, the sensational retelling of the case itself, plus the fact that the movie was filmed on the murder site, reveals the morbid fascination of early theatrical audiences.

SINews OF THE DEAD (1914)

The head-with-a-mind-of-its-own conceit has a long and belated history in horror films, peaking in *Eel Dead*. Those who know their horror ho-

lors are aware of *The Head of Oric*, the 1924 silent film starring a deliciously masochist Conrad Veidt as the recipient of a head transplant from a killer. *Oric* wasn't the first film to use the theme of deadly claps, though. *Sever* of the Dead tackled the idea in 1914, but the film has been lost so long that its unknown even who its stars were (George Meles, brother of film pioneer Gordon Meles, directed). What we do know, besides the tantalizing title, is a bit of the storyline: an industrial accident crushes a man's head, and he is now one puffed on. After learning that the head belonged to an expected murderer, the hero lopes his mind. The viewing public found it deeply horrific. At the time, a review in *Moving Picture World* stated "A more harrowing conception than the theme of the picture could hardly be dug up. It is illogical, disgusting and not deserving of further comment, except that it is well acted, directed and photographed."

THE GOLDEN/DER GOLDEN (1915)

To three minute film fragments of a bottom-sized clay man stumbling around with a dagger in his chest should be enough to convince anyone that this is an important early horror film. Add the fact that it may be part of the first-ever horror trilogy and its loss is even more painful. A German production writer, starring and directed by Paul Wegener, *The Golden* is about an antique dealer who resurrects a clay figure previously animated by a cherub-like child. When the dealer's wife rejects the golden's love, it exacts revenge through a series of murders. Come as clock characters in Jewish folklore, but this was its first appearance as a film monster. Wegener revisited it in 1917 with *The Golden and the Dancing Girl*, a sequel that is also lost. This second film sounds almost like a spoof of the first with Wegener this time playing an actor famous for portraying the golden, who decides to impersonate the monster. (They meet for the early 1900s.) The third golden film is a prequel, which was made in 1920 and is still widely available. The fact that it's an organ play the golden is created to save a Jewish ghetto in Prussia misleads many into thinking it's the first of the series. *The Golden Now He Came Into the World* had a noticeable influence on James Whale's *Frankenstein*, in both the expressionist style and the scene of the monster giving a little girl a flower.

LIFE WITHOUT SOUL (1915)

Joe Edison Company's missing first-minute *Frankenstein* short turned up in the '70s, but



Long Gone: *Dracula*: Lon Chaney as Dr. Jekyll in *Dracula*. After *Midnight* and (next) *Paula Paterson* and *Margi* in *Dracula's Death*

ONE GLORIOUS DAY (1922)

Will Rogers is the unlikely star of this supernatural drama, in which he plays a member of a spiritualist society whose body is entered by a spirit named "Elk." Forrest J. Ackerman claimed *One Glorious Day* was the first movie he ever saw and a huge influence, though he was never able to find a copy. Some believe it may be stored in a European film archive, but a print has yet to surface.

THE BEETLE (1919)

When supernatural horror novel *The Beetle* came out in 1897, the same year as Stoker's *Dracula*, it initially outsold the vampire story three times over. While the UK film version is completely lost, we do know that it's based on the book (Richard Frenn, writing in the *John Journal of Gothic and Horror Studies*, calls it "one of the most damaged books ever.") Richard Marsh's story is of a mysterious insect creature "born of neither god nor man" that relentlessly stalks a member of the British Parliament after he defiles a tomb. The shape-shifting beetle can sometimes take the form of a beautiful woman or a deformed old man, but at its core is a gigantic slave-keeping scumb.

THE HEAD OF JESUS/DER JAMISKOPF (1920)

F.W. Murnau's *The Head of Jesus* changed the character names for Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, but kept the story of a doctor's guesstimate transmutation. The great Conrad Veidt (*The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari*, *The Hunch of Orin*) played Dr. Warren, and veiled shots reveal a suitably dark, expressionistic style. Any one of Murnau's lost films would be a history-making find, but this one—with the combination of Murnau, Veidt and Robert Louis Stevenson—would trump them all.

DRACULA'S DEATH/DRACULA HAL LA (1921)

Dracula usually gets credited with being the first screen version of Stoker. The name changes didn't fool the Stoker estate, however, and a successful lawsuit led to an order for all prints of Murnau's film to be eradicated. In an ironic twist, some copies at *Asafurolu* survived destruction, but the Hungarian production that ran my business's archive is really cinema's first Count Dracula. Directed by Károly Lajthay, the movie was filmed around the original Count's stomping grounds, but varied quite a bit from the Stoker story. *Dracula's Death* focuses on a woman who visits a mental asylum, encountering a man who believes he is Dracula. Later, she is haunted by visions of the vampire, and there is doubt as to whether or not they may be real. Records show that Lajthay was filming in 1920 and the movie screened in Vienna in 1921, but a re-release in 1923 left a trail that still confuses historians today. Enough documentation exists to strongly point to the first screen *Dracula* being a Hungarian entry named *Paula Paterson*, not *Der Jamiskopf*.

THE VISCERA SUCKER/AND MANANAGAL (1927)

The first Filipino horror film featured a flying self-segmenting vampire with a vacuum-extracting proboscis, a well-known South Pacific mythological creature whose breaths lead to trills. Director José Nepomaceno was a pioneer of cinema in the Philippines, and he was known for creating fantastic effects with limited technology and budget. Nepomaceno is said to have created the *ang mananagang*'s preternatural appearance by burying lead actress Mary White and her fellow vampire actors in the ground up to their waists, then using editing effects to make them appear aimless. Little else is known about the film.

THE GORILLA (1927)

There was certainly no shortage of gorilla flicks in the '20s and '30s. From *King Kong* to *Muchos* to *Die New Vampire* (a mystery, to the movie's monkey love movie *Drage* (mentioned later in this list), apes were a hot property. The *Gorilla* sought to cash in on a popular stage play featuring a serial killing ape, but what really set it apart was its ability to spoof the clichés of the day while still delivering on the creep factor—sort of a *Shoan* of the Great Gorilla flicks. The silent film was remade in 1933 as a talkie, but that version is also missing.

LONDON AFTER MIDNIGHT (1927)

Frequently topping lists of most-lost films, *London After Midnight* may have achieved a more iconic place in horror film history because of its absence than it would have if it were in DVD collections today. Without a movie to view, a definitive judgment on its misdeeds today is impossible, but there are plenty of reasons to argue in its favor. Lon Chaney's appearance in a dual role as a

Life Without Soul, the first full-length flick based on the novel, remains lost. The plot varies considerably from its source material, but the dragon of a soulless man is still the central theme. A doctor conducting experiments with "the chemistry of life" falls asleep in his lab while reading Mary Shelley's book and has a dream that asserts him in the role of Victor Frankenstein. The man he creates played by Percy Standing bears little resemblance to the hairy beast of Edison's short or Karloff's bolt-necked monster. In actuality, he looks like an ordinary man, a fact that may have added to the horror when he laid a soul and desires for vengeance lead to a series of murders. First to go are those closest to the doctor, and then a chase culminates with the creature on a ship, abducting sailors a few at a time and tossing them overboard. Victor catches up with the synthetic man at the Grand Canyon, where he lures him into a cave and blows it up. The doctor then perishes of exhaustion, while the immortal monster must wander under the rubble for eternity. When production company Ocean Pictures faded, no prints were saved. An Italian remake five years later, *Il mostro di Frankenstein*, is also lost.



Castle Sinister

Scotland Yard inspector and a shark-toothed vampire would be a huge selling point, once if the story was tacky. Clancy did his own makeup for the film — the only one in which he filmed railroad case makes an appearance — and achieved the disturbing pop-eyed look with non-toxic metal rings. But following directed the film, making London After Midnight his seminal vampire flick, four years before his classic *Dracula*. Movie fans are so desperate for any glimpse of the film that Turner Classic Movies commissioned and sent a reconstructed version using the script and still photographs. The last known copy, alas, was recreated in MGM's infamous vault #7 film.

THE HAUNTED HOUSE (1933)

Silent films were on their way out when *The Haunted House* premiered, but it stayed on screens well into 1935. Part of its success may have been due to the collaboration between director Benjamin Christensen (whose 1932 history of witchcraft film *Hævn* depicted nudity and horror that still seems shocking by silent film standards) and one William Irish, the pseudonym for Cornell Woolrich, whose stories would go on to be filmed as *Rear Window* and scores of Hitchcock TV episodes. Audiences also responded well to the synchronized Vitaphone record that accompanied spooky sound effects and haunting music into the story. While the film is lost, the Vitaphone does survive. Online snippets can give you a feel for the movie's creepy vibe.

INGRID (1935)

Before there was *The Blair Witch Project*, there was *Ingrid*. The first "found footage" film, it was marketed as a documentary to unsuspecting audiences who believed they were watching explorers in *Alma* uncovering a tribe of women who were carried off by apes to produce half-man-half-gorilla offspring. The movie was rigged as true in an effort to quack the ruddy past the Hays Code censors, who allowed the base-based-but-for *National Geographic*-style educational purposes. The ruse started falling apart when someone recognized a supposed Congo native as a Central Casting



actor. While the movie was investigated, the controversy burned up the box office, and *Ingrid* rocked up millions before ultimately being banned. Its huge success led RKO to invest heavily in *King Kong*.

THE CAT CREEPS (1935)

"It's almost well up down all of your nose and test your bravery" read the tagline to *The Cat Creeps*, Universal Pictures' first horror "talkie." Producer Carl Laemmle's film would become synonymous with so-called post-sleeping, making up the bulk of the studio's horror golden age. A remake of the silent film *The Cat and the Canary*, the action begins with the spooky-house staple of a will being read to a nightingale of family members, but in this case, only a ring left near Helen Werlock stands to inherit the fortune. That is, she'll cash in if she can prove by morning that she isn't inherited her uncle's twisted trait: being completely bonkers. This leads the ensemble to spend the whole night in the creepy old mansion trying to scare the girl out of her family's various implied ways. Filmed easily with a Spanish-speaking cast, the complete reels are lost in both versions, but a few bits and pieces of the English version exist. Clips of *The Cat Creeps* were spliced — along with chunks of *Frankenstein* and *New Orleans* — into a comedy horror film called *Don*.

CASTLE SINISTER (1931)

The British film institute lists this mad scientist horror movie among its most sought-after lost films. Not only is it one of the earlier examples of British horror, but the BFI calls director Wilfred R. Moberly one of Britain's most elusive directors. Everything known about Moberly suggests that he was an odd bird, described alternately as "a gloriously eccentric and erratic character" and "something of a neurotic." Financial issues may have led to the film's disappearance, and some think that it might have been given up to creditors as part of his assets. *Castle Sinister* sounds as

word as *Widgy* herself, with a plot that can be pitched in one line: mad doctor tries to put woman's brain in an ape. *Biograph* magazine also mentioned a "generous sprinkling of skulls and skeletons." No stills, photos or ephemera exist for the film.

JAPANESE KING KONG/WARSI KINGU KONDO (1935) KING KONG ATTACKS EDO/EDO NI KONGARETH KINU-KONDO (1935)

Godzilla (1954) gets the credit for starting the Japanese giant monster movie trend, but the country's first kogu creature was *King Kong*. Shochiku Studios had earned big bucks debuting the US *King Kong* in 1933, and before the year was over, it sought to make that profit even bigger by slapping together an unlicensed overgrown gorilla flick of its own. All that costs of the film is a tiny megalomaniac of the ape holding a gasch while posed to smash a building, leading some to speculate that it may not have existed at all. Even if Japanese *King Kong* is a film myth, *King Kong Attacks Edo* (1935) still predates *Godzilla* by a long shot. Zanussi Kinema studio approached RKO for the official go-ahead, transferring the beast's stomping ground to Medieval Japan. Surviving shots from the cover of an old movie magazine show a shaggy monster against a backdrop of feudal architecture. There is some debate as to whether the 1933 film is actually two films or was split into two parts, but as all footage seems to have been lost during the WWII bombings, we may never know for sure.

THE MONKEY'S PAW (1935)

The first talked version at W.W. Jacobs' much-anthologized horror short story from 1900 *Riddle* is particularly sought after as it was made when horror movies were gaining serious steam. Filmed during David O. Selznick's fifteen-month production stint with RKO, the tale of a cursed monkey's paw that grants wishes is said to have been as richly atmospheric as Jacobs' original. Existing stills and viewer remotes bear that



Japanese King Kong



out, with one audience member exclaiming, "It seems that it was always raining, with lightning and thunder, and people coming in wet and cold, and that most of the action

took place at night — a real film noir!" The same viewer remembered the creepy construction of the disorienting monkey hand when a wish was made. The mutilated man who is whisked back to life was played by Annewald Finckh, fresh from his role as the mad assistant in *The Mummy*.

AGARI/KAHARANG BATO (1992)

This Filipino flick about prehistoric people featured Jesus "Og" Ramos (whose physique earned him the moniker "Baron of the Philippines"), plus fun '50s monster elements, including snake monsters and bat people. Filmed in three languages, *Agari* was lost in all versions — possibly *Orcs* vs. *Frankenstein* director M. Adomson bought the rights in 1985 (the IMDB still incorrectly lists that year as the film's release date), cannibalizing the footage to splice into the bizarre *Warrior of the Blood Monkeys*, a patchwork of several films plus original scenes featuring vampires, a sea machine and an embarrassed-looking John Goodman. It's unknown whether or not Adomson still has a complete version, or if the rest of *Agari* remained on his cutting room floor.

PONTIANAK (1992)

The leoparden female vampire of Malay and Indonesian folklore as one of the most popular monsters in Southeast Asian cinema. The first movie appearance of the pontianak, though, was not merely lost, but deliberately destroyed. Actress Maria Menado was booked in her triple role as a beautiful temptress, a decrepit old hunchback and the blood-sucking monster. Galaxy-Korea Film would reprise the legend multiple times with Menado, and the creature remained a staple of Malaysian horror films for decades. Menado herself has lamented the absence of her first screen appearance, but has provided little detail on the unusual circumstances surrounding its destruction. Several sources say that producer Ah Loke Ho dumped the original reels of *Pontianak* in a mixing pool. Menado elaborates a bit, saying that Ho no longer had storage facilities for the films, though she concurs that they were, unfortunately, lost in a quarry.



PULGASARI (1992)

The best-ever South Korean kyoju film was about a fast-growing and voracious ice-eating monster, but the Korean Film Archive calls the film as missing. If the plot and title seem familiar at all, it's because the movie was remade in North Korea in 1985 under circumstances even more bizarre than the first film's disappearance. Film lover and scholar Kim Jong-il was apparently so desperate to make a great Communist film that he kidnapped South Korean director Shin Sang-ok, along with his wife, and forced him to make films under house arrest. The last film he made for Kim Jong-il was a new propaganda version of *Pulgasari*, this time with blatant threats about the power of the collective. *Pulgasari* was shelved around for a while before going straight to video when it was sold to the US. The discovery of a print of the 1982 *Pulgasari* would allow for a real comparison between the director's version and the original story.

NIGHTS OF THE WEREWOLF/LAS NOCHES DEL HORROR LLOBO (1984)

Director/actor/artist Paul Naschy (who died in 2009) was the only person to have played Dracula, the Mummy, the Hunchback, Frankenstein's monster and Jack the Ripper, not to mention other assorted creatures and wendos. He was best known for portraying the Wolf Man, however, a part he played fifteen times in his career. Or was it fourteen? Naschy's second go as the character is not only missing, we also have never seen it — not even Naschy! He wrote and appeared in the movie for French director René Gervais, before returning to Spain without seeing any names. Gervais is said to have died in a car accident shortly after depositing the film at a lab, and with no one around to give the bill, the film disappeared, either misplaced or thrown away. The complicating factor is that no one has been able to turn up a René Gervais — or any evidence that *Nights of the Werewolf* existed at all. No one applied for licenses to film the movie in France, and none of the actors Naschy named as appearing with him seem to have done anything else, ever. Still, Naschy said he once owned but gave away howe ever surfaced. Several film historians say there's no need to search: the movie never happened. Yet Naschy claimed to have remembered filming scenes in the fog on Pontianak railroads, and discussed the plot in a 1994 interview with Videostar: "The film told the story of a professor who discovers that one of his pupils suffers from the curse of lycanthropy. Under the guise of helping him, the professor instead sees him as an instrument of revenge. He dominates the pupil during his transformations by means of sound waves, and in this manner causes him to act against the people he wants to get rid of."

HU-NAN (1975)

There are certainly people who recall seeing this French-made so-à-thriller that starred Terence Stamp as a man whose fears are broadcast to an audience. Those who worked on the movie, however, aren't giving up the goods. No one is even entirely sure how or why it's missing, only that it remains frustratingly unavailable. Reports say it's a reworking of the Ophelia myth, and it's been described as a cross between *The Running Man* and *Slaughterhouse-Five* with a svenky splash of *Zerkow*.

REVENGE OF BIGFOOT/BUFS J. PICKLE AND THE INDIAN (1979)

This low-budget movie filmed in Townsboro, Arkansas, has a lot in common with its monster star: a lot of local folk claim to have seen it, but nobody knows where it is now. Starring Rory Calhoun a mere year before he was serving up *Farmer Vincent* in *Heaven*, the film had a limited release, then seems to have completely vanished. Most of what is known about the plot (a bogey man to run an Indian out of town, but Bigfoot gets in his way) is cobbled together from the memories of movie extras on the IMDB. Rumors say it conveniently disappeared due to the appearance in it of one William Jefferson Clinton, who was eager to disassociate himself from the Bigfoot film during his gubernatorial campaign. The plot thickens when you consider that the film's director, Harry Thomason, was a friend and supporter of the ex-gov, and produced the Clinton bio *The Man from Hope*.

DOLPH LUNDGREN

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BY GREGORY KOPPEL

BEFORE TAKING ONE OF THIS SUMMER'S BIGGEST SHOWS ON THE ROAD, THE CARTOON MEMBERS OF **DETHKLOK** GRANT US MORTALS AN AUDIENCE

1 IF YOU'VE NEVER WATCHED METALCALYPSE, THE ANIMATED TV SERIES ABOUT A FICTITIOUS METAL BAND CALLED DETHLOK, THE GRIMYAS OF THE BAND'S RECENT ANNOUNCEMENT THAT IT'LL BE CO-HEADLINING A 34-DATE NORTH AMERICAN TOUR WITH LAMB OF GOD MAY BE LOST ON YOU.

The show, which is currently in its fourth season (Sundays at 12-15 a.m., E! or an Adult Swim/Cartoon Network), posits that Dethklok is not only the most "brutal" band on Earth, but that the treacherous heroism is so massively popular, it's become the seventh-largest economy on this planet. In the show, a live appearance by Dethklok almost always signals epic catastrophe, gigs are prequel-like events which, either by accident or ignominious, repeatedly prove fatal for many in ear-splitting distances, especially the group's blindly devoted followers, who often come to cartoonish gay ends.

Inevitably once they hit the road, you better too.

But they're not real, you say? True... sort of. Even an imaginary band for an animated show—the work of comedy writers Brandon Seale (who voices singer Nathan Explosion, drummer Percides and Swedish lead guitarist Skewer Skewer Skewer) and Tommy Blesch (who voices bassist William Murderface and Non-

wagon (a.k.a. the "old Wario" band))—required real death metal songs to be forged for the series' many musical sequences, though. And so, since the inception of Metalocalypse in 2006, Dethklok tracks such as "Laser Gunz Get Bentleaz," "Brutalass Hall of Gods" and "Mammoth" have been written and performed almost entirely by Seale and, when necessary, a cast of contributors, primarily drummers like Gene Hoglan (Fear Factory, Death).

There's a funny thing happened: not only did the metal community not mind having the plot taken out of 'em, they fucking loved it. The first split album, 2007's *The Dethklok* (RCA/A&G), sold more than 300,000 copies. By mid-2008, Dethklok had evolved into a live touring act—described by Seale as "a Disney ride with murder"—for which he, Hoglan, bassist Bryan Beller and guitarist Mike Keneally would play the material in silhouette, backed by gigantic video screens depicting their cartoon counterparts. In 2009, a sophomore effort (*Dethklok II*) was released, surpassing its predecessor's sales to become the best-selling death metal album of all time. Dethklok even won Best International Band at that year's Revolver Golden Gods Awards. In addition, the show began attracting guest vocal spots by metal luminaries such as King Diamond, and members of Dimmu Borgir, Cannibal Corpse, Metallica and Morbid Angel, among others. Suddenly, the success of Metalocalypse's imaginary band was very real indeed.



Legacy Of Brutality: (left to right) Ted Nugent, Nathan Explosion, William Mortenson and Skaggs Stridolf

Granted a rare opportunity to speak with the cartoon members of Deathklok from their winged, horn-shaped fortress Mondass (just on a billion acres and manned by hooded "Mokaleens"), we raised life and limb to engage the near-unintelligible band of semi-famous lunatics about their upcoming tour (beginning August 1) and the horrors of the road. If you're of the belief that 2012 might see the Earth's populace snuffed out by the Apocalyptic, you should know we all have to survive the Metastep-Lypse first.

How does Deathklok prepare to co-exist in a four-day trip?

NATHAN: It's really going to San Bernardino, then we prepare by clearing out gas masks. What a shithole.

PICKLES: San Bernardino only offers two things: crystal meth and bad smoke.

William Mortenson: I don't know what you're talking about. I'm a gentleman. I'm a good person. I'm a good person. I'm a good person.

urgency of their party 300,000?

NATHAN: We learned a while ago that it's a bad idea to leave the house with a bucket of livers because they tend to go bad after a few days. Always better to have fresh ones helicoptered in when you're totally sure you don't want to be here for the next day.

Skaggs Stridolf: I don't know what you're talking about. I'm a gentleman. I'm a good person. I'm a good person.

SWISSGARS: They acknowledge religion with their name. We don't observe God, therefore, we



Dark And The Mourners: Pickles, and (left to right) for courtesy from Metastep-Lypse season 4

IT'S A BAD IDEA TO LEAVE THE HOUSE WITH A BUCKET OF LIVERS BECAUSE THEY TEND TO GO BAD AFTER A FEW DAYS.

NATHAN EXPLOSION

are more brutal. It was a simple logic puzzle.

What do you think about Lamb of God singer Randy Blythe announcing his candidacy for the US presidency earlier this year and claiming that, if elected, he'll cancel Christmas?

SWISSGARS: Fortunately, none of us are registered voters so we aren't bothered by these kinds of things.

Does Deathklok have any unusual breakfast or pre-show rituals?

PICKLES: We just eat in a chocolate fountain and watch 'em be uncomfortable... covered in chocolate. That's fun.

TODD: And does it put it in the shadows and a sick and evil dot. Pretty much can't do a show unless we do that.

When the band's next thing you'll be doing is a new album?

(TODD): One time our showers didn't work and we had to shower at a fucking holiday inn.

MURDERFACE: What a fucking low-class shithole. We nearly killed ourselves because of embarrassment.

What are your favorite songs to play live?
SWISSGARS: I don't know. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know.



Downstage Kick: *And Deftones rocked the Reverend and us out for blood, (below) a fan is divided over the band's Apokalips, and (page) The Deftones and Deftones II*

NATHAN: They can expect live music. There's a thing called a metal community and you don't go around upstaging each other and if you do, people think you're a fuckin' asshole. So if we happen to upstage the band, then so be it. But we're not asking out to make another band look like douchebags, you see what I'm sayin'? So let this be a

lesson to other young bands out there: don't be a dick to other bands you're touring with 'cause there's such a thing as a METAL COMMUNITY!

And watches every television while you guys are away? Does your sister like the Apokalips, she gonna get into it, your sister?

NATHAN: Okay, that's racist.

Speaking of APOL, are you guys big horror movie fans?

NATHAN: Yup. We're. Great question.

If you guys (Deftones) were having to pick the best movie in horror, would you pick it to be like?

NATHAN: I always had no idea where a homeless guy with the lottery and how builds a restaurant franchise and eventually inherits his real father... oh, and then they die. Horribly.

Pickin' your real giant, Apokalips? Apokalips was kind of a messin' LA, huh? How did you adjust to Deftones's gay parents?

PICKLES: You just step out cocaine for blood and a larger male demographic and you're pretty much there. Oh, and I needed to learn how to be a death metal drummer so I went away to Northern France to study drums during a few horrible winters.

And then when you come back, you're like, 'No, your parents are gay!'

NATHAN: Honestly, these days I get a lot of it from watching [TV's] *My Secret Addiction*. It takes a lot to make my stomach churn but between that and *Toddler and Tones*, I know there's plenty more brutality out there that needs to be written about.

And then when you come back, you're like, 'No, your parents are gay!'

many fans and innocent bystanders?

NATHAN: I'm sorry, that's a lawyer question. We're musicians.

PICKLES: Yup, we aren't paid to feel one way or another about the death of innocents, sorry.

SNOWGAIN: Let's keep it moving...

Silver did your Apokalips do the Mayan calendar reading this year? A lot of people believe it may signal the Apocalypse.

NATHAN: I think it's all a big ploy by the Mayans to get you to buy another Mayan calendar.

How do you cope with the notion of being into apokalips to no many happy metal fans?

NATHAN: Cope?

PICKLES: Cope?

TERO: Cope?

PICKLES: Again, we can't be bothered by all the kids out there who want to be us.

SNOWGAIN: Or all the ladies who pick off to us.

PICKLES: We have have one job to do and that's get drunk—

NATHAN: Make music.

PICKLES: Right, that's what I meant...

And Deftones, just make sure you've watched it everything from make people in other people's minds, making people think, people and you. How do you guys think you're like? (Sings to Deftones, 'My Secret Addiction'...)

WINTERFACE: Dear sweet god, if I'm Gena Stromer's age and I'm still working, I will literally deep-throat a Winchester rifle. What happened to me? What the hell is wrong with this country???

My dear Deftones, if you're like, 'No, your parents are gay!'

NATHAN: Hey, just off our back, we're working on it.

WINTERFACE: What, are you gonna mad? go to? Shook.

WE AREN'T PAID TO FEEL ONE WAY OR ANOTHER ABOUT THE DEATH OF INNOCENTS, SORRY...

PICKLES





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MEMENTO MORGUE



And's July interview, Lyle Blackmore said, "I'm pretty sure we alleged [Bigot's] was not [Sweet] Dine's. Alexander at the 8th court with [James] [Blackmore] [Blackmore's] [Lyle] [Cryer]"



Lawrence E. Harvey and Barbara
Cunnington (top) with Eric Margie, Arley
Teresa Freytag, and Wendy.



The winning Band's Michael Rucker gets up on stage with his 10 son's Ben, Michael, Justin, Erickson and Vernon to receive at the Calgary Civic and Patent Museum Expo, and tonight has performed several times at the EN Centre.



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That weekend took up for our screening of *The Dead and Above* director Jay Holden Jones appears via Skype at our Chamber Party, two-hour screening.

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BLUE UNDERGROUND FOUNDER WILLIAM LUSTIG REFLECTS ON TEN YEARS OF SEARCH AND RESCUE IN THE GENRE TRENCHES



DIGGING IN THE DIRT

by GEORGE PACHECO

While William Lustig's status within cult, horror and grindhouse circles as the director of *Maniac*, *Vigilante* and *Maniac Cop* may be belted proof, he's arguably become just as well known for his influential home video imprint Blue Underground. This year is an incredible one—10 top-notch Blu-ray/DVD sets of your wish. Above it all, Lustig is working on a company that's one of the best at restoring fan-favorite horror and exploitation films with masterly intent, branched out on his own to restore classics like *The House by the Cemetery*, *Dead and Buried*, *Suspense* and several obscure titles (e.g., *The Wailing*, *Carroll O'Connor*). He authorial special editions. We caught up with Lustig to talk about ten years of cinematic excavations and his upcoming remakes of two of his most beloved films.

What sparked your love affair with genre movies?

I started out as a writer, then I started as a director. I was in a time when I was exposed to the European genre movies. Many of them were really playing outside those venues. So I was able to see films which were subsequently become better known than they were during their original release. I'm very grateful to have grown up in New York in the 1970s. I was in my teens, and it was a really amazing period in the city's history.

How would you describe that environment?

The city was actually kind of grimy, was rampant and it was a totally different place than it is today. People who grew up this time will never forget it. I was a period under way in the city's history. You had a sense of the loose like the Son of Sam, there were a couple of kidnappings, a garbage strike... you named it. It was going on. Prostitution was very out in the open. Where I live today in New York used to be a drug market. It was a different place.

What was your biggest challenge in starting Blue Underground?

Financing. [Laughs] We wanted to do so much and we only had so much to spend. Later, it became finding movies that are worth putting out because it's not a renewable resource being in the catalogue business. I'm not in the new release business so that's the challenge ourselves like mine are faced with today. There have been many films [we couldn't release] for various reasons. It could be that somebody outside one of the materials weren't up to my specs. There's a lot of detective work in what we do, especially with many of these films being 30 or 40 years old. One of the most difficult was tracking down the original company negative for *Pole's* *Zombie*, which was one of our first releases. It took a long time to get it.

Photo left to right: Joe Spill, William Lustig and Caroline Munro on the set of *Maniac*

most recent releases. That took about two years to happen.

What film are you most proud of releasing?

One of my favorites. When we put out was a little-known Italian film called *La Scorta*. We did a great marketing for the release and I thought it was a terrific thriller... yet it wasn't very popular. Another one of my favorite moments was doing the featurette for the spaghetti western *Comanches*. We had composer Ennio Morricone, Tomas Milian, Franco Nero... it was just a wonderful featurette, and one that still brings tears to my eyes.

What are your thoughts about Frank Khaliloun's forthcoming remake of *Maniac*?

I've given to the set and I was given shots of the script to compare it to but I put on a lot of whatever in terms of disliking. I definitely think it's going to be interesting. It's going to be different than the first film, yet it's going to be very similar. The film is being shot primarily from the point of view of the killer, so there's that kind of gimmick involved with it. As far as the acting, Eljah Wood is not Joe Spill but when I watched him on set, he incorporated a complexity which I can only compare to Anthony Perkins in *Psycho*.

You're also involved with an upcoming *Maniac Cop* remake.

Nickolas Winding Refn [Drive, Valhalla Rising] is the executive producer, Larry Cohen [Maniac Cop] is writing it, and we haven't chosen a director yet. Shooting is due to start next fall in New York. I'll be producer, but when a director is hired, I'll know enough to step out of the kitchen... I think what we're trying to do with *Maniac Cop* is basically explore the legend of the character rather than do a straight state-for-state remake. In the original *Maniac* we had a woman-for-woman remake.

CINEMACABRE

FILM • DVD • REISSUES



CUPS RUNNETH UNDER

PIRANHA 300

Starring Danielle Panabaker, David Koechner
and Christopher Lloyd
Directed by John Gulager
Written by Marissa Daneman and Patrick Melton
Danceshow

Does the phrase "a step back for the Piranha series" actually mean anything to anyone? For a franchise that started with a film that, in the best of times, was largely forgiven on account of entertainment value, it makes sense that *Piranha 300* would attempt to tick up even more of what made the original so almost memorable. It also makes sense that, as a sequel to a remake of a rip-off of *Jaws*, its essence has been pasteurized to almost flavourless levels.

When science biology student Maddy (Danielle Panabaker) returns home for summer vacation to work at her family's water park, things are more than a little fishy. Her alien stepfather Chet (David Koechner) has been busy making upgrades in time for opening day, including an adults-only zone complete with pole dancing by "water-certified shoppers." At least her old friends are still the brainless hordes

she remembers. Unfortunately for them, brainless hordes is the choice meal for the prehistoric school of piranhas that are about to turn the water park into a larder pot. Maddy's sort-of boyfriend Kyle (Chris Zylke, who, in the film's funniest moment, takes professional responsibility by screaming at a pool full of half-eaten corpses to get out of the water) is a dirty cop who turns a blind eye to Chet's undeclared water war, which pumps the piranhas right into the action. Can the expected disavowal of flesh moping, blood spilling and genital eating.

Even with the return of Dr Goodman (Christopher Lloyd) and Deputy Fallon (Wing Hwang), who repeat a lot of canards that includes David Hasselhoff, Gary Busey and director John Gulager's own father Clu Gulager (*Waters of the Living Dead*), *Piranha 300* beats a lot more like soothsaying exploitation. There are less boobs, blood and beer-soaking this time around, and when a film's qualities are found in its qualities, we're left prematurely worried and hungry for more. To inappropriately and incorrectly quote Shakespeare, these

D-cups, which once sprung forth the milk of human kindness, have now all but runneth under.

TAL ZIMMERMAN



NUCLEAR DISASTER

CHERNOBYL DIARIES

Starring Jesse McCartney, Jonathan Sadowski
and David Koechner
Directed by Bradley Parker
Written by Drew Pelt, Corey Van Dyke and Shaun Van Dyke
Warner Bros

Not even the most mind-blowing dedication is worth eating if the people you're travelling with are inufferable. That pretty much describes most modern horror films, doesn't it? *Chernobyl Diaries*, however, is one of the worst examples of characters with two sittings: bland and obnoxious. While writer/producer Drew Pelt penned perfectly believable thirtysomething characters for his *Paranormal Activity* films, the twentysomethings in this movie feel like they were created from templates bought from a vending machine.

Three white bread Americans — a guy, the girlfriend he plans to propose to and their female friend running a broken heart — arrive in Russia to visit the guy's brother, whose character traits are prying, talking about chicks and referring to himself in the third person. To impress his guests, he hires a former Russian military man to take them on an "extreme" tour of Pripyat, the town beside the shuttered-down Chernobyl nuclear plant, which was abandoned 25 years earlier and sits in an irradiated restricted zone. Along with a couple of hippie backpackers, they sneak into the area (equipped with a Geiger counter to avoid pockets of radiation) and encounter mutant fish, decaying build-



Chernobyl Dories: An extreme tour of a cinematic wasteland

ings rapidly and some not-so-fleeting wildlife.

All seems well and high-fives are exchanged until they try to leave and discover their van has been sabotaged. When the van goes down, they're attacked by things in the dark and we're left to wait for characters we don't care about to get picked off one by one. The plot dissolves into a video game of stock players running and shooting in dark corridors, hunted by buddies you've seen in million-folded horror movies many times before.

If you lose attentioned pieces, there's plenty of zombie-gore here – though not actually from Polyray, but rather a mix of Hungarian and Serbian locations and CGI – which keeps things somewhat interesting after the plot slips into autopilot. Ultimately, though, *Chernobyl Dories* is one big missed opportunity to explore such a dramatic, spasty setting for something more interesting than pump-scans, a filmed conspiracy plot and neo-characters who struggle without meaning.

Cover this one in concrete and leave it.

DAVE ALEXANDER

BARNABASTARDIZATION

DARK SHADOWS

Starring Johnny Depp, Michelle Pfeiffer and Helena Bonham Carter
Directed by Tim Burton
Written by Seth Grahame-Smith
Warner Bros.

When it was announced that Tim Burton and Johnny Depp were teaming up for a big-budget adaptation of the beloved 1965-71 cult soap opera *Dark Shadows*, there were rumblings of discontent, but the general consensus was that if anyone could successfully recreate the show's garish flavour for the big screen, it would be Burton. Now, after several years and



numerous delays, *Dark Shadows* has finally been released, but the result doesn't exactly do the series proud. More or less following the basic premise of the original TV show, the film has wealthy 18th-century non-unioner Barnabas Collins (Depp) transformed into a vampire by his mistress – the beautiful servant-Angelesse Boastard (Eva Green), who also just happens to be a witch – after he casts her aside in favour of the virginal Jacoba De Poze (Bella Heathcote). Impressed mad as a chimed coffin, Barnabas is released two centuries later, at which point he returns to his ancestral manor, Collinwood, to live amongst the current descendants of the Collins family, including mistress Elizabeth Collins Stoddard (Michelle Pfeiffer). Predictably, he clashes with Angelique once more, as she declares war on the entire Collins clan.

While the Hammer-esque 18th-century-set progeny is suitably dark and moody, once Barnabas is unleashed, Burton seems to have trouble deciding whether he's making a horror movie or a parody of one. Of the numerous attempts at humor, a few work (a bewildered Barnabas watching '70s musical hit-makers *The Carpenters* on TV is incredibly funny), while others come off as farcical and lame. There are, however, numerous scenes that are surprisingly vicious and intense – particularly for a film rated PG-13.

The costumes, production design and cinematography are all top rate, as is the atmospheric score (at times, reminiscent of the series) from frequent Burton collaborator Danny Elfman (see review, p.57). But the story seems to take a back seat to the visuals, with plot points introduced that feel tacked on (e.g., out of nowhere, one character is revealed to be a werewolf). Performance-wise, Depp and Pfeiffer stand out, but



the Seth Grahame-Smith-penned script leaves much to the cast with little to do. Alice Cooper and Christopher Lee make welcome appearances, though, and it's nice to see several of the stars of the classic series (including the late Jonathan Frid) in brief cameos.

While not quite the full-blooded, serious adaptation that some were hoping for, at least Depp's Barnabas makes for a preferable alternative to the other toothless vampires of late.

JAMES RUFFELL

SCANTLY MADE SCORES

THE THEATRE BIZARRE

Starring Bob Kane, Caroleen MacColl and Tim Savini
Directed by Douglas Buck, Buddy Giovinazzo, et al
Written by Zach Gervino, Richard Stoltz, et al
Image

Discotheques, exorcistofans, eye violence, load monsters, vampire dentists and a cerebral feeding frenzy. Nope, these are not the contents of Last Chance Lovers's diary, but just a few of the perverse pleasures offered up in the Grand Guignol-inspired horror anthology *The Theatre Bizarre*, the brain child of producer David Gregory (Seven Films).

The first segment sees the return of Richard Strange (*Over Driven*) with a Fulci-inspired homage to Italian horror movies. It stars Caroleen MacColl (*The Beyond*) as a love-sick witch who seduces a handsome American vacationing in France. Beautifully shot in the most-drenched Pyness with a sumptuous, Macronism-inspired production design, "The Mother of Terrors" is easily the best-looking episode of the entire project.

"I Love You" by Buddy Giovinazzo (*Conduct Shock*) breaks a theme that pervades throughout the series: the bloody breakdown of relationships gone wrong. I suppose this is what happens when you invite a group of middle-aged men to direct the episodes. Tim Savini crashes the party with "Wet Dreams," about a man, his penis and a pussy monster. It's the anthology's silliest segment but the inclusion of the grand wizard of splatter leads a certain street cred to the proceedings.

The standout episode is *The Accident* by Douglas Buck (*Crushing Moments*), a sobering meditation on violence and morality that sees a mother trying to help her little girl make sense of a tragic motorcycle accident.

Karin Haxell (*Subconscious Creativity*) then delivers the most bizarre, wacko-inducing entry, "Voice Slime," about a serial killer who injects the viscous fluids of her victims into her own eyes in order to steal their memories.

And finally, the collection's most exuberant segment is David Gregory's *Shards*, about a couple caught up in a psychosocial relationship centred upon compulsive eating, which culminates with a macabre banquet.



Jeremy Koster (Hazard of Gore) handles the wraparound bits starring Lido Kier as the automaton host of an encrypted camera where the films play to an audience at one Awakened stage and rife with wireless pontifications, they at least afford Kier an opportunity to turn it up (never a bad thing).

While the episodes vary in quality, every director demonstrates an unrestricted enthusiasm for a filmmaking process where the only creative restrictions are those imposed by the significantly low budget. Being on this sequel.

STUART F. ANDREWS

BRAINS BEFORE BROS

THE CORRIDOR

Starring Matthew Avoys, Nigel Bennett and Stephen Chambers
Directed by Dean Kelly
Written by Josh MacDonald
RPG Midnight

While the in-built wive of Canadian genre cinema has so far been marked by colorfully overblown reimaginations like such as *Father's Day* (RMR 120) and *Ride With a Shotgun* (RMR 118), *The Corridor* is the inevitable equal and opposite reaction: a psychological horror film as measured and subtle as it is scary.

After suffering a psychotic episode from watching his man die at a drug overdose, Tyler and his four oldest friends convene at his family's cabin for a winter getaway to reconnect and stage a wake of sorts. While there, they stumble onto a strange pocket in the universe in the surrounding woods — an ever-expanding corridor of eeriness that is as previous to weather and is also an apparent dead zone for cellphones and the group's snowmobile. Standing within it, the guys feel mentally refreshed or "cleansed out" (dispute suffering nosebleeds), and are elated at the idea that they've made some sort of scientific discovery.

While one of them takes the first shift to guard their new find, the rest return to the cabin, where they begin to realize they've all developed a collective psychic connection (the chilling scene shows two of the guys glazed over in an unbearable paper-rock-sissors stalemate). Back in the woods, a hunter who happens by becomes the first of many casualties, before the friends — save for Tyler, whose prescribed medication apparently blocks the corridor's influence — turn on each other as old grudges resurface and get settled in ugly ways, and everyone grows increasingly divorced from reality.

If it's not already apparent, Josh MacDonald's intelligent, inventive script for *The Corridor* takes many unexpected turns, some so unpredictable, stomach-churning ones. It's a bit of a slow burn but solid performance long takes chugging along until the utterly riveting gory and bleak, at times eerily ambiguous, finale. The CGI effect of the corridor does get a little noisy during this finale, but budgetary constraints certainly aren't enough to break the frame of this exceptionally well-told story, which seems to take us to bold, terrifying new places.

TREVOR THOMAS



OVERLOOKED, FORGOTTEN AND DISMISSED

THIS ISSUE: LANCE WRESTLES WITH WILD WOMEN

IN SPACE NO ONE CAN HEAR YOU SUCK PLANET OF THE VAMPIRE WOMEN

RVD Visual



Movies like this make me think the video gods, because this is one of those rare gems that has everything I need in a movie: sexy women, gore, scary aliens, high body counts, buckets of blood, pleasure domes, laser battles, slippers, cyborgs... the list goes on! The film follows a group of sleazy space pirates being pursued by intergalactic cops for knocking off a space station casino. They become stranded on a — you guessed it — planet of vampires, where, one by one, the crew is turned into bodacious bloodsuckers.

Kudos to the producers for combining enthusiastic actors in sloppy outfits, a bunch of foam rubber monsters and some sub-par CGI to successfully create a movie that I believe is destined for cult status.

BODY COUNT: 43

BEST WEAPON: fully-armed space Wampago

SARAH HARMER

THE TALE OF THE VOODOO PROSTITUTE

Media Media International



Movies like this make me think the video gods, because this is one of those films that makes me wish I'd listened to my mother and become an accountant. It features a pimp who dabbles in the dark arts in order to move up in both this world and the underworld, but his plans are put on hold after a voodoo priestess/prostitute turns his dick into a rattlesnake before disappearing. He then has to call a truce with the other pimps in town and get a leg moved to get her back. With a lead who's as charismatic as a

leaked porno, piss-poor sound and picture, and a script possibly written by a squirrel, *The Tale of the Voodoo Prostitute* is a better drink cooler than DVD.

BODY COUNT: 13

BEST WEAPON: Rattlesnake penis

MOOTORCYCLE MANIA

NINA: CRAZY SUICIDE GIRL

Chemical Blue



The majority of films that I review are North American, so I thought I'd take a look at, and a whiff of, some Italian cheese for a change — by relative! *Nina: the crazy suicide girl* is actually a woman who's neither crazy nor particularly suicidal. She does wear a schoolgirl kilt and thigh-high boots, however, and rides a motorcycle, carrying a torii sword. She also has the cutest little pet, which she constantly flatters as she infiltrates a cult that kidnaps foreign babies to sacrifice to their demon dad. Though it boasts

a high body count and quite a bit of nudity — both male and female — *Nina* suffers from a heavy soundtrack and lame-as special effects. As far as the small-footed goes, this one's pure pisswater.

BODY COUNT: 24

BEST WEAPON: industrial blowtorch

LAST CHANCE LANCE

ENTERTAINMENT WEEKLY 21

PEISSUES



MAY THE BOOBS BE EVER IN YOUR FAVOR

COUNTRESS PERVERSE (1973) DVD

Starring Alice Arno, Howard Vernon and Kati Franco
Directed by Jess Franco
Written by Jess Franco and Elisabeth Lehou de Lehou
Mondo Macabre

The *Hunger Games* movie was sorely lacking in these things: naked archery, lesbian sex and cannibal dinner parties. Well, Mondo Macabre aims to make things right with its director's cut of *Countress Perverse*, one of roughly a dozen films Jess Franco made in 1973.

As greenhouse expert Stephen Thewissen explains in the DVD extras, not only did the filmmaker smash out a dozen flicks that year, he also started shooting at least a couple more that were never finished. Additionally, we learn that, as was often the case with his land cheapies, this film was retitled, rescut and tarified with additional hardcore sex scenes, depending on what a particular market demanded. So then, what do we get in

this director's cut?

Answer: some low-energy softcore lesbian sex scenes, a bit of cannibal and a lot of taker. Based loosely on the 1934 film *The Most Dangerous Game* (now based on the Richard Connell short story from 1924) and the Marquis de Sade's *Philosophie dans le Soudoir*, it features a pair of twisted aristocrats (played by Alice Arno and Howard Vernon) living on an island, who hunt naked women (after sleeping with them, of course, duh!), and then feed the meat to the next unsuspecting guest, who in turn becomes prey. That's about it, save for the appearance of another couple that throws a wrench in the diabolical works.

Franco wrings plenty of production value from his exotic island and sprawling mansion locations. The women are equally beautiful—yes, his muse Lina Romay appears in a supporting role—and Mondo Macabre has done a stunning job with its transfer of the original negative. The improved image, however, only highlights the



weird special effects (notably a mounted head that looks like a homemade Halloween mask) and technical goals (watch for the disappearing-again shoes) (but this is par for the course, as any Francoophile will tell you, and rather small potatoes compared to the film's other problems).

Countress *Perverse* could've been a minor classic in the considerable Franco canon, given the possibilities of the concept, if only it lived up to that title and was a lot more...perverse. The big hunt lasts but a few minutes, the sex scenes are bland, too many landscape shots are used to stretch things out to the 79-minute mark, and there's literally more blood in *The Hunger Games*.

Much better madness abounds in the rest of the Mondo Macabre catalogue, but if you're big on the Franco factory of filmations, this review won't deter you. We both know you're gonna hunt it down, lap up its nooks and crannies with your sleazebag eyes, and then mount it on your DVD shelf with the rest of your topfash *Perverse* indeed.

DAVE ALEXANDER

CLOSE CALL WITH DEATH

THE ASPHYX (1973) Blu-ray/DVD

Starring Robert Stephens, Robert Powell and Jane Lapinskas
Directed by Peter Kosminsky
Written by Brian Campbell
Rejuvenation

The concept of immortality has been an all-time theme in genre films, from *The Man Who Could Cheat Death* (1959) and *Dr. Phibes Rises Again* (1972) to numerous adaptations of literary classics such as Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and H. Rider Haggard's *Sans*. But a most unusual twist on the subject comes courtesy of *The Asphyx*, an offbeat gothic horror flick from 1973.

Well-respected Victorian-era philanthropist and inventor/scientist Sir Hugo Cunningham (Robert Stephens) has several unusual interests, which include conducting research into psychic phenomena and taking pictures of the recently deceased. After photographing several subjects taking their dying breaths, he notices that every image contains a dark apparition hovering near the body. Initially theorizing that it must be the soul making an exit, Sir Hugo later notices another spectral glow—one which seems to register only in photographic plates and on film—when he shoots a tragic bathing accident. He comes to the conclusion that the nebulous formation is actually what the ancient Greeks referred to as the *Asphyx*, the spirit of death that materializes to claim its victim.

With the help of his son Giles (Robert Powell), Sir Hugo devises a way to capture and trap his own *Asphyx*, in a quest for everlasting life that can only be achieved by placing himself in a

horrible, near-death situation. However, the good scientist not only wants to make himself immortal, he has the same plans for Giles and the young man's love-to-be, Christina (Jane Lapotnik). Naturally, things don't go quite as planned.

A unique gothic horror of the era, *The Asphix* has long been outgated by better-known Hammer and Amicus horrors. But unlike some of the later Hammer horrors, the admittedly slower-paced film relies more on creepy atmosphere, suspense and an impending sense of doom, than sex, violence or gore. The special effects are decent, and the sequences involving the screaming spirits are still sufficiently effective, meanwhile, the photography by Oscar-winning cinematographer Freddie

Young and top-rate performances from Stephens and Powell further contribute to the engrossing nature of the tale.

Presented in a stunning, newly remastered widescreen transfer, *Redemption* has also included an extended cut of the film, which, while featuring some non-restored footage, adds thirteen minutes to the 88-minute runtime and is obviously quite noteworthy for fans. Additional extras include a theatrical trailer and photo gallery. Definitely capture this quirky, understated gem in the British horror canon.

JAMES DUNRELL

CALLING ALL TAPEHEADS

NAIL GUN MASSACRE (1995) VHS

Starring Michelle Meyers, Ron Quinn and Rocky Robinson
Directed by Bill Linkin and Terry Laffon
Written by Terry Laffon
Frightmare Video

Let's call it what it is: *Nail Gun Massacre* is not a laugh. It is not high, or even low, art. It's a collection of sounds and images that vaguely spell out a rape-revenge story. In the same way a porno tells a puzzy delivery tale. It's old and



On *Asphix*: Steve (Robert Powell) with his wife's photography device

weird, and that's why you're reading about it right now. It's also newly available on limited-edition red VHS from Frightmare Video.

Here are the things that happen: a woman named Linda (Michelle Meyer) is awkwardly gang-raped by a pack of shouting construction workers. From there, a mysterious figure armed with a backpack-powered nail gun starts killing everyone dumb enough to barbecue, hang their clothes outside or engage in fortification up against a tree. On the case are local sheriff Thomas (Ron Quinn) and Dr. Rocky Jones (Rocky Robinson), two dudes who couldn't be worse shit at their jobs, but try noneth-

less. It's not just the cop and doctor who are unfit for their career choices, either. So are the actors who play them, the guy who filmed them, and the guy who told them what to say. It's down there (or up there) with the worst of the

worst, and therefore, amazing viewing material for groups of loaded folks who are able to get past the opening rape scene. With that in mind,

there are a few fun elements to *Nail Gun Massacre*.

The killer, wearing a motorcycle helmet, delivers some awesomely shoddy one-liners ("You know, the worst headaches are the ones between the eyes"), the kind that would get him punched out if he wasn't armed with an ax-powered nail gun. The cam and hair are as 1985 (and rural Texas, to boot) as you need them to be and the music makes the whole thing feel like an unearned TV pilot for a show you would have had the lunchbox for, had it been made. The cover art for the clamshell (what else?) case by M. Nakatani Or-



man looks serious as, too.

Recommended for diabolists, completists and masochists. For everyone else, do we really need to talk you out of laying down cash for a red VHS tape?

TAL ZIEGLERMAN



LATE-NITE ARCHIVE

FILM *Pods 'n' Ends*

by Paul Conroy

"You're dead!" raves Kevin McCarthy's character in the bleak finale of 1966's *Invitation of a Body Snatcher*. It's one of the most chilling sci-fi horror lines of its era, notable not only for its deft evocation of paranoid-racked horror but for its director, a modern American cinema legend who had only a passing challenge with the genre. Don Siegel traded almost exclusively in crime thrillers and police procedurals throughout his 37-year career, and he was one of the best — this was the man who put the most powerful handgun in the world in Clint Eastwood's hands, reworked Ernest Hemingway for Lee Remick and gave John Wayne his last ride into the sunset, after all.

But unlike other Hollywood testosterone factories such as John Ford, John Huston or even Sam Peckinpah (who makes a *Body Snatcher* cameo), Siegel shied away from adopting a rough 'n' tumble persona and let his work speak for itself. A Cold War parable released in the wake of Senator Joseph McCarthy's claims of widespread Communist infiltration, *Body Snatcher* is a literary, character-driven film with ripped-from-the-headlines urgency. Finally re-released on DVD and Blu-ray by Olive films, it has also finally aged a day — *Body Snatcher* remains a terrifyingly modern exploration of identity and conformity that delivers into many of the same themes as Siegel's later action epics.

McCarthy stars as small-town physician Dr Miles Bennett, who returns from a trip to add reports from his nurse that several of his patients are reporting that certain family members just don't seem like themselves. Miles wonders if it's mass hysteria, until something often (Siegler happens!) his friend Jack (King Donovan) discovers a fleshy body outside his house that is acquiring his features as he sleeps. Miles and his partner (Joan Wylder) soon stumble on a greenhouse full of half-seen pods that are forming even more bodies, and those ones bear an uncanny resemblance to their own faces. Slowly, they realize that not only has the town been taken over by emotionless duplicates linked from alien vegetation, but those clones have begun a covert operation to strip pods all across the country.



Though it shares a common plot device with films such as *Invaders From Mars* and *Career From Outer Space* — intelligents and neighbors acting under the control of aliens — Siegel handles the idea quite differently. Instead of relying on the passive come-they-will-and-submissive reaction common in the 1950s, the film is almost entirely told from Miles' point of view, as his investigation of the pod people's behaviour unravels into his own full-blown nightmare. It's not the story of an alien invasion but of Miles' loss of self-will's left running freely in a freeway. Or at least that's how the director's original cut ended — B-movie studio Allied Artists demanded filming scenes to soften the blow of the sequel's "you're next" conclusion, a move that enraged the Siegel.

But perhaps what's most interesting is how similar Miles is to the lone-wolf outsiders in many of the filmmaker's action and crime films. Like Eastwood's famous "Dirty" Harry Callahan character, Miles is a standstill defiant figure struggling against an oppressive system he cannot hope to overcome. Just as preky ideas about human rights and due process keep Harry's attempts to dent an over-crazing

crime rate, Miles must reject the pod people's offer of a world free from desire, emotion and faith once as he watches the pod distribution network taking hold around him. Even Miles' deflected attempts at warning passing motorists are reminiscent of Harry tossing his badge away in disgusted resignation, or Steve McQueen single-handedly storming a German machine gun bunker in Siegel's war film *Hell is for Heroes*. Though these characters manage some similar victories, there's a distinct mobility in their inevitable defeat.

For us century 1950s Cold War parable, *Body Snatcher* is also remarkably ahead of its time. Scenes and ideas from it still surface in horror films today, from a whole town caught in an evil conspiracy and characters fighting off a sleep that will surely result in their deaths, to the gory organic horror of the pods themselves. But the film's timeless appeal (and long-standing adaptability for remakes, such as the limited 1978 version of the same name, Abel Ferrara's 1990 *Body Snatcher* and the 2007 Nicole Kidman/Daniel Craig vehicle *Invitation*) is rooted not in its plot details, but in the humanity of Miles' struggle against conformity. For viewers, it's a truly notable theme that Siegel pushes into not just sci-fi and one that leaves only regrets that the director never returned to genre filmmaking.



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CAME FROM BOWEN'S BASEMENT

R **13**

DRIVE-INS, DELETE BINS AND OTHER SINS

Got my Marjoe workin'?

by John W. Bowen

"W" hen the hell did you get those goddesses checking?"

A perfectly reasonable question, and one I'll address later. First, a bit of context.

We tend to use the term "career trajectory" most often when discussing a mega-to-mega/vice-to-mega scenario or some variation thereof, especially in showbiz. It wouldn't normally pop up when the career in question consists of a run of moderately successful B-movie roles (including some pretentiously cheesy horror) and guest spots on 1970s and '80s network television in everything from *Kojak* to *The Love Boat*.

But when the subject is Marjoe Gortner, there ain't a whole lot of normal to be had.

His light film *Forbidden* may recall Gortner sporting opposite Playboy bunny Tobei Bensen in the 1983 faux-Falco dramatic possession backloter *Misquidam*. A smaller number of truly obscure credits will cite *McHale* (1985), in which the survivor (Judy Landers) of a serial killer attack wakes up in an asylum where mad doctor Marjoe and madder, badder doctor Mary Wamora are chemically lobotomizing patients. Then there's the 1976 space trash *Starcrash*, which teams Gortner with Caroline Munro, Joe Spinell, David Hasselhoff, Hamilton Camp and Christopher Pennings.

But the mighty Gort's truly come to turn in *Enter* where remains 1970's *The Food of the Gods*, a very, very loose adaptation of the H.G. Wells novel, directed by giant-killer specialist Bert I. Gordon (the inebriated *Shrinkin' Man*, *Explosive 10*) and sporting a cast of what-the-fuck-are-we-doing-there types (including Pamela Franklin, Ida Lupino and Ralph Meeker). Marjoe plays a pro footballer who takes off for a weekend hunting trip with friends to an island off the coast of British Columbia only to find it overrun with giant animals, the results of yet another Experiment Gone Awry. The stoner goopy with substance was initially extended



as an additive to form animal feed to grow maggots and such, but has been accidentally dumped into a nearby stream. Giant

worms take out one of Marjoe's posse first, but our boy's shining moment comes when he stumbles across a barn full of giant chickens and finds the resident rooster less than hospitable. His death struggle with the alpha-chicken is one of the great reward-button moments in horror cinema—right up there with Mexico's also-no drinkin' shagun blast, but its aftermath is equally memorable, in which Marjoe, having vanquished the big cock janny, had to use that,

shoots the starman-themed immortal line of dialogue at the proprietor of the barn. Of course, there's still room for a proper climax roughly an hour later, in which a pack of giant rats lay siege to the farmhouse in what resembles an episode of *Wormy Warbler* gone horribly horribly wrong. But Marjoe's own story cut-wards are given film role to

with the seasoned pros. His parents made it killing in the ocean, sleeping with on the land, reward chest and on TV.

"I would want to go out and play and we would have to spend hours and hours memorizing," he later recalled to documentary filmmakers. "Finally, my mind would slip and my mother would lose her patience with me and put a pillow over my head for a little bit and another pill. Other times she'd put me under the water faucet, but she never wanted to put any marks on my body because she knew I had to be in front of the press."

Marjoe himself never saw a penny and sweetly told his parents to stuff it when he hit his teens. By his twenties, however, he found himself hunting for cash and decided to jump back into the racket, but with a twist: he secretly struck a deal with documentary filmmakers Sarah Knaflman and Howard Smith to shoot him in a spin of reality, and then openly denounced his video career as a scam (the above quote is taken from the movie). The 1972 doc simply titled *Amyor*, created a sensation and ultimately won an Oscar, but strangely hasn't released much of a following. Marjoe gathered up his earnings and headed to Hollywood. While he's never officially retired from showbiz, he hasn't been in any films since the mid-'80s, instead organizing celebrity-studded charity events for TV.

So there you have Marjoe. As a child, he took on the Devil, as a man, he snuffed the rooster. How many of us can make such a claim? Now get the hell out of my basement before I press the button under my desk and release those goddess chickens. **D**



has ever taken. From the age of four, Hugh Marjoe Reiss Gortner ("Marjoe") being an amalgam of Mary and Joseph was thrust into the lineal Christian lineage as the World's Youngest of Ordained Evangelist Marjoe (pictured above), a precocious and shockingly talented tyke who could belt out hymns and benedictions

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BLOOD IN FOUR COLOURS

BY PEDRO CABREJALO

I'm not a big sports fan, and judging by the lack of horror/sports offerings in existence, I'm willing to guess that most of you aren't either. But the creator of *Salvian's Sloggers* aims to do far more and baseball what *Friday* the 13th did for horror and camping, and he's betting that some crossover appeal does exist.

"I've been a fan of baseball since I was young and I've seen every baseball film," says writer Mark Andrew Smith. "I've also always been a big horror fan. To me, the two things go great together, like chocolate and peanut butter."

It's an unlikely combo at first to be sure, but it works so well in *Salvian's Sloggers* that it's a wonder the concept hasn't been explored much previously. The premise is simple enough: the eponymous team is a minor league group well past their prime that nevertheless keep on playing until they end up battling against the local team of a strange small town called Malice. It's business as usual at the old ball game until the sun goes down after the seventh inning stretch. That's when the *Sloggers'* adversaries begin to show their true flesh-eating colours, with the players transforming into multi-limbed monstrosities that begin to eat their way through the rest of the game.

While the concept first occurred to Smith in 2004, he didn't start work on the series until 2008, when his took inspiration from the *Baseball Furies* going in the movie *The Mummy* and combined the idea with his love of zombie film. However, the creatures in *Salvian's Sloggers* have less in common with traditional Romero shufflers than they do with the types of monsters found in spoiler films such as *Dead and Dead Alive*, two of Smith's other great influences.

"With spoiler horror, the audience cringes at what's happening but it's also cathartic and very

funny at the same time," he notes. "You shouldn't be laughing but you can't help yourself, which is one of the reasons I love horror comedy."

No surprise then that *Salvian's Sloggers* turns out to be a very funny book. From the motley crew of downtrodden yet lovable *Sloggers*, to the ghastly creatures comically chomping down on everything they can seize, to the satirical views of small-town Americana, the book's tone is clearly tongue-in-cheek.

Adding to the script's naivete is the art of James Stokoe, who perfectly straddles the line between Mad magazine-style parody and a genuine affection for the material, which allows him to poke fun at the story without belittling it or dampening the effect. His use of gore is gratuitous and as shocking as it is hilariously outrageous.

"James does really detailed and beautiful work," affirms Smith. "He has done a great job conveying the personalities of each character, which is not easy in a book where we have to keep track of an entire baseball team."

But it's not just the players that Stokoe had to oversee. He was, of course, also tasked with creating the many creatures that appear at sunset. To his credit, the artist has not only come up with cool monsters, he's also designed each of them slightly differently, in effect giving them their own personalities.

"I had James come up with the creature design and I left it up to him," says Smith. "The only thing I told him was that they weren't zombies. Then once I saw the designs, I knew exactly what the monsters looked like as I was writing the next scenes in the book."



Salvian's Sloggers: A good idea of creatures and baseball

The creative approach may be unconventional, but then *Salvian's Sloggers* is no ordinary book. Originally scheduled to be published and distributed through comic stores, Smith even took a different plan of attack when pre-orders didn't meet with expectations. Realizing that he would lose money if the comic was published traditionally, Smith turned to Kickstarter, a popular crowd-funding website for creative projects that allows creators to put their works directly into readers' hands.

As of press time, *Salvian's Sloggers* has raised more than \$60,000 in pledges – far exceeding the original goal of \$6000 – and has attracted the interest of two film production companies. It would seem this sports/horror rookie has hit one out of the park.



This relaunch of *Godzilla* takes a somewhat more unconventional approach to the giant lizard's story: imagine a typical Jason Statham movie where he has to protect the life of a child, complete with over-the-top violence, bad puns and ridiculous stunts. Then throw in *Godzilla*. That's this comic in a nutshell, and, surprisingly, it works. The Statham-esque character is a professional soldier-for-hire named Bexar, complete with shaved head and British accent, who is tasked with watching over the daughter of a Japanese billionaire — an easy job had *Godzilla* not just rampaged through the city. It's a fast-paced, action-packed issue complemented perfectly by Simon Gao's art, which breathes new life into the series and sets up an intriguing showdown



I was a big fan of David Loss' *Mystery Men* series for Marvel, which perfectly blended horror with pulp sensibilities. Loss takes a similar approach with *The Spider*, and the results are equally captivating. At first, the comic appears to be a fairly straightforward pulp tale of a vigilante who guns down criminals, burning his spider emblem onto their foreheads as a calling card. But then it takes a strange twist



near the end, with the introduction of a zombie child and allusions to a nefarious master plan. It's a fantastic juxtaposition, with Colleen Worley's art adding to the overall grim and foreboding tone. A solid start to what looks to be a great series.

The creators of *Marvel Zombies* do a superb job of reinventing the series with each new incarnation. It also helps that — despite changes in roster and locales — they never forget what readers want: super-powered zombie carnage. And this new series continues the trend, with a story set on a parallel Earth where World War II was won by Nazi zombies. Howard the Duck and his Ducko Dozen (no, really) travel to this other plane and do battle with zombie invaders and plenty of beetles. Carnage is high, so

is the fun, and Frank Marafino and Mirco Pierfederici do a excellent job giving fans exactly what they want. I say, let the *Marvel Zombies* madness continue.

Not a lot of action to be had in the latest issue of *B.P.R.D.*, but there's plenty of set-up for what promises to be yet another quality entry in Mike Mignola's mythos. The bulk of the book focuses on agent Andrew Devon's attempts to transport a young girl named Felix, who may have psychic powers. When Felix gets a bad premonition about the train they've just boarded, all hell breaks loose — figuratively at least, and then more literally. It's to the credit



of the creative team that an issue comprised primarily of exposition is so enjoyable. The writing and art continue to be top-notch, making *B.P.R.D.* one of the most reliable comics on stands today.

Any Steve Niles and Bernie Wrightman collaboration is worth celebrating, but this one is that much more special since it marks Wrightman's return to the character of Frankenstein. Unlike some other comic artists, his work continues

to be jaw-droppingly good, and he doesn't disappoint here. Niles, too, has crafted a strong sequel to Shelley's original story, with plenty of morsels to satisfy fans of the source material. He's also unashamed to play with the mythos in a great meta-moment early on in the book, the monster is working at a carnival and posing himself off as a copy of the novel's legendary creature. Why scenarios such as this point to a fun and clever story ahead, but even if the excessive slips, Wrightman's art will always balance the scale.



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THE SLASHER MOVIE BOOK

J.A. Kerswell
Chicago Review Press

They've stalked us everywhere, from summer camps to slumber parties, backing their way through victims in graphically explicit ways using every instrument of death imaginable. They are the blank faces, shapes and shadowy figures we see in our nightmares, an apocryphal collection of supernatural demons and murderous maniacs who seemingly defy death both on screen and in our imaginations. They are the "slashers."

The *Slasher Movie Book* by J.A. Kerswell is an ambitious compendium of the subgenre, which profiles its earliest influences, such as *Thirteen Women* (1932) and *Peeping Tom* (1960), all the way through to its descent into "video hell" and its subsequent resurrection in the glut of modern-day serials. While not every film receives mention in this retrospective, Kerswell manages to offer up a good mix of mainstream titles and



John Carpenter's seminal *Halloween* (1978) is given due credit for defining the formula that all slasher films would soon follow (i.e., psychotic killer, outlandish murders and isolated venues).

Originally released in the UK as *Revenge Wounded: The Slasher Movie Decad* (2010), the new North American edition combines an equally impressive collection of hard poster art and publicity stills from all around the world (many taken from Kerswell's personal collection), with a critical overview of the high and low points of the slasher movie subgenre, as well as its impact on mainstream Hollywood.

In the final few chapters, Kerswell examines what he defines as ten key films from the Golden Age, tracks the Top 10 Body Counts and breaks down the movies that caused the biggest "blood-bath at the Box Office." All of this, combined with his impassioned view of the subgenre, makes *The Slasher Movie Book* a superbly impressive package that will have horrorphiles adding more

than a few new titles to their own must-see movie list.

RENDAL SCOTT

THE CRONING

Laund Barron
Night Shade Books

If you need your horror well written, clever and scary, you will want to acquaint yourself with the work of author Laund Barron immediately. These qualities, already exhibited in Barron's two previous short story collections, *The Image Sequence* (2007) and *Occultation* (2010), are also manifested here in his first novel.

Don Miller is a geologist with a growing suspicion that his anthropologist wife Michele may be involved in something sinister on her trips around the world, studying unknown tribes and weird customs. The plot progresses in a non-linear fashion through three interwoven time frames: 1956, 1980 and the present. The hints and revelations from the plot are obscured by Miller's partial amnesia but, as it turns out, it is not his incipient senility (he is 80 now) but something far more terrible at play.

The implacable structure is vaguely connected to the three phases of a woman's life—Maiden, Mother and Crone, according to Wiccan religions. "Croning" refers to a celebratory rite of passage that commemorates a woman entering the post-menopausal phase of her life. However, the pagan aspect of the plot conceals a vast, ancient conspiracy of followers of The Old Leech, and while Barron avoids the worn-out names of Lovecraftian lore, his cosmic horror is true to the spirit of the master. Similar to Lovecraft's myths, *The Croning* seduces its unique topography (Black Hills and Mystery Mountain) and loose mythology

connecting many of Barron's stories (especially "The Men from Perth," from *The Book of Chthon* and "Mysterium Tremendum" from *Occultation*).

This is a remarkably assured debut novel that proves Barron to be a worthy descendant of Machen, Blackwood and Lovecraft, and a major voice in modern horror. His writing is fluid and very vivid; it is cinematic in the best sense of the word. The characters are convincing and en-

dearing, and Barron's power of suggestion adds to the thick, spooky atmosphere. In fact, the carefully built suspense often reaches nail-biting heights. The story will undoubtedly chill you with its cosmic vision, but also with the intimate catastrophe of a marriage and mind simultaneously falling to pieces. One shouldn't use the word "midsompace" lightly, but no superlative seems undeserved regarding this first-rate horror novel.

SEAN DENHAMORE

THE CABIN IN THE WOODS: THE OFFICIAL VISUAL COMPANION

Joss Whedon and Drew Goddard
Titan Books

If you haven't seen *The Cabin in the Woods*, stop reading now. *The Visual Companion*, and this review, are spoiler-heavy if it's for your own good.

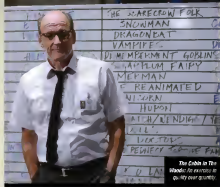
Despite its slim appearance, this is a dense read and very much the definition of quality over quantity. The first portion of the book is a thorough interview with filmmakers Joss Whedon and Drew Goddard. The process in creating the film—from concept to screenplay to filming—is told by the two collaborators in candid and occasionally humorous detail. It's a great read that covers

many of the struggles involved in bringing this film to fruition, including its shelving during MGM's bankruptcy and Lionsgate's subsequent acquisition of it. Hearing the two men discuss *Cabin* and what influenced it, as well as their love of horror, is inspiring—despite the film's playful jobs at genre clichés, these two make it clear that they're *Monster Kids* through and through.

Taking up the lion's share of the book is the shooting script. The interesting thing to note is that the screenplay marks one of those rare occasions where almost everything is intended up on screen. For budding screenwriters (specifically fans of Whedon's style), it makes for some educational reading.

The last third of the book, though, is all about the monsters. Here, we have concept art, behind-the-scenes photos and stop-by-stop explorations of the creation of *"The Army of Nightmares."*





The Cabin in The Woods: An exercise in quality over quantity.

"Hero" rebrands such as the Buckner, the Sugarplum Fairy, the Mermaid and Fornices, Lord of Bondage and Pain are shown in various stages of design, from initial illustrations to final makeup applications. We even get glimpses of some of the creatures that were only shown on the film's infamous "whiteboard" or in the briefest of flashes during the last-act bloodbath. (Did you know there was a squiggle in the mix?) The book is also interspersed with storyboards, quotes from the film's cast, set designs (including some great shots of the assorted knickknacks found in the cabin's basement) and FX blueprints for some of the kill sequences, including, yes, death by unicorn.

This is one of the most solid behind-the-scenes books for a film released in a long time. For Wikipedia devotees, horror fans and those with more than a passing interest in the nuts and bolts of filmmaking, it's an essential read.

REM MCKENZIE

NOCTURNAL

Scott Sigler
Crown

At the heart of Scott Sigler's sprawling new novel is a hard-boiled buddy-cop crime story anchored by homicide detective Bryan Clauser, the emotionally unavailable straight man to his foul-mouthed, popular foil Pookie Cheng. The pair is tasked with solving a string of gory, high-pastile murders in San Francisco involving mutilation and occult symbology.

As the story unfolds, however, the classic crime narrative resists as wildly as the race of genetically twisted subterranean human-monster hybrids the detective pair are unknowingly hunting. That's mostly one component here though—Sigler's ambition is vast, weaving together several plots and perspectives. A belated young man is also somehow linked to the ancestors,

THE GRIM READER

STEPHEN KING'S BATTLEGROUND



Stephen King's latest offering commemorates the TV adaptation of Stephen King's tale of an assassin vs. vengeful toys. Edited by Robert Christian Matheson, *Battleground* explodes with a welter of interviews and insight. The book also includes the original short story, plus the dialogue-free script that inspired the Emmy Award-winning first episode of *Nightmares and Dreamscapes*, which was based on it. We may be hell, but *Battleground* is pure, gritty joy.

STEPHEN KING'S BATTLEGROUND

Robert Christian Matheson
Daunt Press
Daunt's latest offering commemorates the TV adaptation of Stephen King's tale of an assassin vs. vengeful toys. Edited by Robert Christian Matheson, *Battleground* explodes with a welter of interviews and insight. The book also includes the original short story, plus the dialogue-free script that inspired the Emmy Award-winning first episode of *Nightmares and Dreamscapes*, which was based on it. We may be hell, but *Battleground* is pure, gritty joy.

ROCK HIPSLEY

10 MINUTES FROM HOME



Bill Howarth's *10 Minutes from Home* might start out like a standard apocalyptic zombie novel, with scenes that could be taken straight out of a *Twilight* script, but it slowly unfolds into a well-remembered sci-fi story about one of the most harrowing experiences a couple might have to face. Since for those of you located in Detroit there are plenty of references to genre hot spots, such as the town of Panopticon and Toronto's Slender Cinema.

JESSA SCHAUB

DOOM



LOVE POEMS FOR JERUSALEM
Natalie Zina Walechka
Insomniac
Who'da say poetry can't be dark, smart, hip and full of pop culture sass? Certainly not the author of *Doors*, or anyone who has flipped through its pages. Full of verse about sinister places ("doorn") and equally sinister faces (we're your love poem book buddies, let's probably get an ode in hand, all manner of weepers, diabolos and flesh hanging recesses bleed through *Natalie Zina Walechka's* free-form poems. Beautifully, beautifully.

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ONE STRANGE CENTURY

BY JESSA SUBCZAK

ASK EDITORS ANN AND JEFF VANDERMEER TO DESCRIBE WHAT COMPRISES A "WEIRD TALE" AND THEY'LL PROBABLY HAND YOU THE WEIRD, THEIR 1000-PAGE TOME OF SHORT STORIES THAT SPANS THE LAST CENTURY. Though originally considered a low-brow form of literature, history has been kind to the weird tale, and today it is held in high regard, with prize-winning "weird" authors such as Algernon Blackwood, H.P. Lovecraft, and Ray Bradbury now celebrated for their innovative and imaginative storytelling.

The *Weird-A Compendium of Strange and Dark Stories* (out now from Tor Books) offers readers an opportunity to see how the subgenre unfolded and evolved, through a spectacular, chronological collection of well-crafted shorts. From works by Lovecraft to contemporary greats such as Caitlin R. Kiernan, Ramsey Campbell, Neil Gaiman, Clive Barker, and Stephen King, the *Weird-A* team compiled a well-balanced mix of entertaining and historically valuable fiction.

"It almost killed us," Jeff admits, noting that the publisher only gave them six months to ready the book. "Except for some anthologies that function as textbooks, no one has put together an anthology this large or comprehensive for more than 30 or 40 years. When you throw in the complexities of eBook rights, well, let's just say at one point we wound up explaining the internet to some readers who held the rights to one story. But we did it because it's important to push yourself out of your comfort zone, and we knew that our research for this book would stretch us for decades to come."

While all of the included stories contain some degree of fantasy, you will not find cities or worlds within the pages of *The Weird*, nor will you find any of your favorite conventional monsters. The selection criteria, Ann explains, was exclusively strict.

"First and foremost, it had to be a true weird tale and it also had to be original," she says. "We found during our research that many stories that came later, in the 1970s and '80s, were but pale imitations of better stories that preceded them. We also wanted to make sure that the stories, when put together in this book, told a

larger tale. Each story creates a conversation with the other stories in the anthology. In addition, we worked hard to ensure we didn't have duplication and that we were able to represent the weird tale in all its forms."

This award-winning duo caught out work from outside of the horror genre as well, including offerings from fantasy scabbers George R.R. Martin and Claude Ségolles, surrealist Luciano Carlinianni, historical novelist Margaret Irwin, and science fiction's Pransky Mittu. They also looked beyond the traditional USA/UK language boundaries, to include international tales translated from their native Czech, Japanese, French, Spanish and Italian.

"We read or skinned through over six million words of material," adds Jeff. "We did decide to ignore vampires, werewolves and zombies as too archetypal and known, however. How can it be truly weird if you immediately know the tributes of what is unwelcome?"

While the inclusion of some stories such as H. Marion Crawford's horrific and lively "The Screaming Skull" (1908), an influential ghost story about a naval captain haunted by someone he may have killed indirectly, and Lovecraft's "The Dunwich Horror" (1928) is pretty much a given in such a compendium, less predictably, there's also Frank Keller's "In the Pearl Colony" (1916), which describes an unorthodox barbaric device that takes twelve hours to kill a person, and Michel Bernanos' "The Other Side of the Mountain" (1967), the only story published under his real name, about a young man who voluntarily boards a French ship heading to the gold mines of Peru, only to find himself coming into a reality that is contradictory to his own. As disparate as these entries might seem, when combined with introductions that give each story historical perspective and explain who the authors were inspired by and in turn influenced, they make for a wholly satisfying reading experience.

"Weird fiction" provides more to us than straight-ahead horror," explains, "because it challenges me to seek out answers I may never find. It allows me to explore dark and dangerous places without actually being in danger myself. And it never, ever bore me... The desire to know the unknown, to seek answers and perhaps even have a bit of control over the world around us is a compelling reason to read weird fiction."



as well as to protagonist Clauser, while low-intensity, covert assassins, fortune tellers, political bureaucrats, junkies and the creatures themselves are all given ample voice.

Just as he's done in past novels, Sigler is keen on citing science — particularly genetic theory — as the genesis of his bloodthirsty monster race. It's a complex idea that the writer communicates well, and one that his couples with a considerable social history of the breed, how they came to dwell beneath the city, and why they kill. Their world is bloody, repulsive and freakish, yet as with most characters in *Nocturnal*, we come to empathize with them, at least in part.

Likewise, Sigler challenges notions of morality from all perspectives. Policing is, at best, a grey area, thematic violence seems justified at times (and sometimes it's almost enjoyable, depending on the recipient), and even the most subjugated individual can eventually be corrupted by power and anger. Although he challenges us in this respect, Sigler is still very much a brutalist — there are very few happy endings for anyone in *Nocturnal*, and often it's the innocent characters who seem to pay most dearly.

Tension is also the author's forte, and he's able to draw us into a slow build, offering brief moments of catharsis before throwing Clauser (whose one flaw is that he suffers from a characterization that occasionally lacks subtlety) and the others back into perpetual turmoil.

Dark, feral and often gripping, *Nocturnal* is a intelligent horror that maintains a deep sense of theatricality if we're lucky; the surviving characters will one day clash again.

ERIN DAVIES

FREAK

Jennifer Hillier
Gallery Books

Every reader needs the occasional break from Dostoevsky epics and philosophical treatises on human nature. It's perfectly normal to crave pulp, page-turning literature; it's satisfying, like snuffing your face full of hot, buttered popcorn. Toronto author Jennifer Hillier's novel *Freak*, the follow-up to her successful 2011 debut *Crimp*, would seem to fit the bill perfectly. It's a dark crime thriller with plenty of blood and sex to keep your interest peaked, and features a sexy leading lady in mourning, who also happens to be stuck behind bars, perhaps wrongly. All in all, the makings of a promising sequel, right?

The story picks up where *Crimp* left off, with heroine and convicted killer Abby Mindax in prison, noting like a peevish Hissiebel Lector-scape femme fatale. Just like Lector, she has information that can help catch a serial killer who's on the loose and slicing up street girls, carrying the message, "True Abby Mindax," on their bodies. Abby, it seems, has a tin. On the other side of things is retired police officer Jerry basic, whom Abby almost killed in the last book. He returns to the case as order to get whatever information he can from her, hoping to bring this new killing spree to an end. Add to the cast Jerry's bubbly blonde intern, his former partner and a few other peripheral police officers and you have yourself a typical crime drama crew.

The first few chapters start off very promising, though a bit generic, but the narrative soon becomes a little too reminiscent of the "A-File" episode of *The X-Files*, in which Mulder and Scully track a killer with a similar penchant for circling wounds into his victims, albeit stood up to compete with today's sensibilities. At the outset, there are a couple genuine scenes and descriptions gory passages, but ultimately Hillier seems to favour sex, relationship issues and banter over action. Tone is unreliable, superficial characters, poorly described settings and a tenuous plot, and suddenly there's very little reason to keep reading.

Beyond a reinforced Silence of the Lambs-type story and a few worthwhile sequences, *Freak* offers little in the satisfying summer book department. And with plenty of good, light reads out there with which to gorge oneself, best spend your leisure time snacking on something tastier than stale popcorn.

JESSA SORCZUK

LIBRARY OF THE DAMNED

GETTING HEXED WITH GENMA FILES

Horror is about pushing boundaries and breaking rules, and one of the authors who does this best is Toronto's Genma Files. Her fiction, a potent cocktail of horror, dark fantasy and erotic imagery, is dense, intellectual, poetic and undeniably challenging. Fresh from wrapped her razor-sharp trilogy — a horror/fantasy/horror/western hybrid that features a gay gangster in a world full of magic, darkness, betrayal and ancient gods — with *A Time of Bones* (OxZine Publications), Hills let me pick her brain about the challenges of writing and publishing such a non-traditional narrative.

Where'd the idea for this series come from?

Though horror has always been my primary genre, I've been interested in fantasy archetypes for at least as long, and had always wanted to write a historical novel set in a universe where people randomly developed magical powers. ... The main problem with such a universe would be "if there are people out there whose abilities are literally only constrained by their imaginations, that's why I built the world out of imaginations!" So I settled on top of that the fairly horrific idea that magic — now called "hexes" — doesn't coalesce because they're constrained with a hunger that drives them to try and parasitically vampirize other hexes' powers.

Why feature a queer gangster?

I believe in representation of every possible type, which was one reason I wanted to take the supposedly inherently "hectic" western genre and deliberately write a story within it that would feature a fully the 100-type authors who happened to be both tough and preferentially good with his guns, but also smart, pretty and outright queer. But I can't be I'm also a functionally heterosexual woman who happens to be very turned on by the idea of two guys having sex, and since I started out writing the *Reinslayer* series strictly for myself, I just put it in! I know I did enjoy writing.

Did this make the trilogy hard to sell?

Not to OxZine Publications, thankfully! They were extremely down with the whole "black magic, gay porno horse opera with Aztec gods" concept, and I count myself extremely lucky.

Will you read another person like this?

For more readers seem off-put by the fact that the books are pretty specifically violent than they are by my having a dysfunctional gay romance at the centre of things, though I do recall at least one review that decided the fact that there were no "real" people to root for, to which I say: galley as charged.

How difficult was it to write a trilogy of novels after years of penning short stories?

Really hard. Grubbing it's an emotional marathon being involved with the same set of characters for three years straight, and I'm also very much looking forward to writing something that won't require an hour of research for three pages of text.

BRONICA S. HUBBARD





THE FRIGHT GALLERY



REPORT BY GARY PULLIN

THIS MONTH: THE NEEDLE AND THE DAMAGE DONE

THINK EMBROIDERY IS ONLY FOR GANNIES AND CRAZY CAT LADIES? THINK AGAIN.

Toronto native Sabrina Parolin drives a stake into that misconception with her wonderfully asgrail, hand-stitched horror-themed creations. A recent graduate of the prestigious OCAD University in Toronto and an art history buff, she cites artists Vincent Van Gogh, Henri Toulouse-Lautrec and Gustave Klimt as influences, but also master horror artists Basil Gogos and H.R. Giger. Clearly, Parolin's dark heart lies with monsters.

"I grew up watching the original Universal monster movies with my dad, and they remain some of my all-time favourite films," she says. "The Boris Karloff Frankenstein films in particular strike a chord with me. I love the humanity of those movies and how little they needed to rely on special effects to create memorable performances and spooky atmospheres."

As a budding artist, Parolin would watch her mother do intricate needlework, but it wasn't until three years ago that she started melding her love of horror films and textiles. Perfectly stabbing at fabric with tiny needles, it's easy to see how painstaking the process can be. Parolin explains that she approaches her monstrous embroidery in much the same way she would a painting.

"I start by creating a drawing that acts as a base for the piece, and then transfer the drawing onto fabric," she says. "The sewing process is extremely time-consuming, because it basically involves filling in the drawing stitch by stitch and layering colours until I feel like it is complete. For my larger pieces, the entire process can take weeks to complete."

Working in bite-sized proportions, Parolin's smallest works measure roughly two inches across, which forces her to be selective with the details. "I have always preloved making small because it gives me more control over what I'm creating," she explains. "It can be challenging working on such a small scale at times. However, I think it has also helped me improve my technique and become more efficient."

But it's precisely the attention to detail that led to one of the artist's most challenging pieces (pictured, top) being featured in the fan art section of the official Facebook page for Ridley Scott's sci-fi apocalyptic *Proximity*.

"I make an effort to challenge myself with every piece I do, so the most recent work I completed — a portrait of Michael Fassbender's character, David, from *Prometheus* — was definitely the most complicated yet. Portraits are always a bit challenging, and even more so when embroidered!"

Astron-6, the makers of *Father's Day* (RMM 128), recently commissioned a portrait piece of the film's departed dad-raping serial killer, Chris Fuchs-



man, from her, as well (next). The juxtaposition of the quaint embroidery with the psychotic villain is hilariously morbid. As a fan of the film herself, Parolin is well aware of the irony between the subject material and her medium.

"I think what has drawn me to embroidering horror characters and themes in the first place is the interesting contrast created by the irregularity of the two things together," she explains. "I've only really begun exploring this, but I'm down to it."

Parolin has also recently started creating sticker sets inspired by the monster movies she collected growing up. Her *Evil Dead*, *Universal Monsters* and *John Carpenter's The Thing* series have all sold briskly and she plans on creating more due to their popularity. A limited amount of sets are still available at etsy.com/shop/sabrinaparolin.

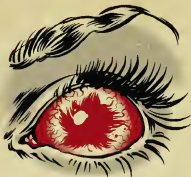
Do yourself a favour and check out Parolin's blog (sabrinaparolin.tumblr.com), as well, for more of her unique work. It's sure to keep you in — ahem — stitches.



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MENU: SPAGHETTI AND MEAT SERVED RARE



Celebrated Italian horror writer and director Lucio Fulci launched *HorrorVideo USA* this year, so let's dig into a delicious dish of their spaghetti splatter!

Paolo Cavara is best known for his roaring 1971 giallo *The Black Belly of the Tarantula* (see *RM95*). His only other foray into the genre, the sleazy *Plot of Fear* (1971), languished on the back-log market until recently, when *HorrorVideo* finally released it, wisely eschewing the UK title *Shady Pools*.

The film opens with a pair of brutal murders: a wealthy maoist is strangled by a prostitute and a woman has her skull split open with a pipe wrench in the back of an empty train. An explanation from the famous German children's book *Der Struwwelpeter* is left at the scene of each crime. As the murders continue, the investigation by reliable playboy Inspector Lombardi (Michele Placido), with the aid of his lover, model Jeanne (Carmen Dory), leads to an upper-class world so society that is a front for both a sex club for its decadent patrons, and a diamond smuggling ring.

This giallo/police/detective mash-up is excruciatingly labyrinthine, but it's well worth following along. Notable markers include a shocking rape scene and a grim methook hanging; other highlights include a status-rit fight and lesbian sex scenes. Among the international cast are Tony Stearns, Eli Wallach and Italian exploitation vet John Saxon. The DVD sports a superb transfer with Italian and English-language tracks, three interview featurettes, and liner notes by *Fangoria* editor-in-chief Chris Alexander.

Murder *Superman* (1968) is the fear film from Riccardo Freda — director of the first Italian horror film, *Vampiro* (1958), and mentor to legendary cinematographer/director Mario Bava. (Bava is said to have finished the film for Freda and is sometimes credited as co-director.)

A woman (Joan Gamon) is throttled in her bedroom by a black-gloved assailant. As she is about to gasp her last breath, the camera pulls back to reveal a film set. The attacker is Michael Stafford



(Giovanni Petrucci), a famous horror actor traumatized by childhood memories of murdering his father. He decides to leave the studio and visit his estranged and ailing mother (Anita Strassberg) at her country estate, with his girlfriend (Silvia Baccanti) in tow. They are later joined by his co-actor (Domena), the director (Henri Garcia) and the director's assistant (Martine Brochant), all of whom are promptly stalked by a black-gloved killer.

With its fog-shrouded, crawling-creature locale, classical score, satanic undercurrent and in-covert dream sequences, the film is firmly rooted in the gothic grandeur Freda helped foster, but raucous, sex and violence keep it contemporary.

The interlarded gore effects, by Angelo Matali, with assistance from then-vet *FX* artist Sergio Stalder, range from class (a gutted cadaver) to cheese (a sex in the head and a chessman throat-slitting). The real attraction for Eurohorror fans is the climax, a series of revelations that nearly out-bleeds maestro Bava's *A Bay of Blood* (1971). The beautiful Blu-ray contains English and Italian options, a deleted scene, three interview featurettes and more notes from Alexander.

That was this, *Osobdo Terzo!* *Horror Show* (2010) is new Director Gabriele Albanesi (*The Last*

House in the Woods, 2006) in on a one-man mission to rehabilitate the Italian horror industry and his sophomore effort wears its *Argento* and *Fulci* influences on its sleeve (well, actually on the T-shirts the main character sports).

Alessio (Giuseppe Soleri) is a budding writer attempting to get his first film into production. His producer scorns Alessio's splatter script and arranges for him to write a thriller with Italy's bestselling horror author, Ubaldo Terzani (Paolo Bonolis). Alessio agrees to live in the charming but sinister Terzani's luxurious home until they complete their collaboration. Terzani draws him into his sex- and drug-filled lifestyle and intellectually dominates Alessio until their relationship explodes into rape, murder and dismemberment.

Albanesi, who also wrote the script, restricted the screen cast to three characters and set it mostly inside Terzani's house, concentrating the budget on gorgeous hi-def cinematography, a scintillating original score that recalls Goblin's work for Joe D'Amato's *Beyond the Darkness* (1973) and gore effects by Stalder, who provides dismembered corpses and an eye-popping gag that rival the best in Italian horror cinema. The flawless Blu-ray includes both language options, a commentary track, a screen test, an earlier short by Albanesi, two trailers, a "making of" featurette and yet more interviews running wild, courtesy the indefatigable Alexander's liner notes.



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the DEVIL'S PLAYLIST

His may not be the last of Barnshaw, but after watching *Bloodshot Bill* court, snarl and wail up his way through a raft of ground-bell, brilliant, leaching sexuality in Toronto's Silver Star Hotel recently, one thing's for sure: that boy's got the Devil in him.

As the "one-man band" that Mother, through drink and mud, did kick down while chugging away at his saxophone and growling about gods and swamp monsters, it's as if he's channeling the unlikely spirit of some old bluesman. The spooky spectacle reminds me of all those well-worn tales of musicians selling their souls at the mythical crossroads in exchange for not-so-good-gives talents.

"Yes, I sold my soul years ago in my folks' basement," he confirms offstage. "At least I think I did."

Having revealed all the ample sweat he's shed from his efforts, "Bill's" loses his full of peace," he says with a laugh, as we endeavor to talk and somehow the subject of my hometown of Winnipeg, Manitoba, arises. He minutely recounts the morbid details of a 2000 tour that brought him to the prairie city three times in one summer.

"The first time, I was playing at The Royal Albert Arms, a legendary place that's a must-stop for bands to play," he begins. "It's a sleazy old hotel and bar. Well, on the front page of the newspaper that day is 'Body Found Disembowed, Decapitated, Disemboweled' and the murder had happened at the hotel, in room 308."

On his next stop in the city, Bill played a different venue, where later that poor mountaintop body of a local DJ—who'd been missing since the previous October—would eventually be found entombed in one of the walls.

"I remember going out the back for a cigarette and there was a weird smell, but sometimes bars just have that weird smell, y'know?"

But his dead body would've still been in the wall when I played that night.

The third time, Bill returned to the Royal Albert, and guess which hotel room they gave him? You, 308.

"It was crazy because they painted the walls the lightest color green," he explains. "You'd think they'd put on two coats of a darker colour but it was so light green that you could see lines of blood on the wall beneath it. I had a bunch of homophobe bala-hoo and I just stuck 'em around the room for good luck. I took a bath too, and heard later that that's where they found all the body parts! It makes you wonder, considering what a good job they did with the paint, how well they scrubbed that bathtub."

Considering one of Winnipeg's lesser publicized nicknames is The Murder Capital of Canada—frequently among more homicide per capita than any other city in the country—Bill's tale isn't entirely surprising to me. And yet, damn it if something about his veneer for talking it and the macabre nature of the three scenarios doesn't make me a little nervous for the old boy.

So maybe there's a little of the Devil in me too.

I guess it is.

HOT OFF THE PRESS: Bloodshot Bill has written and recorded a song called "Another Red Queen" exclusively for *AM*. You won't find this on his latest album, *The Out of This World Sounds of Bloodshot Bill* (Savage Recordings, not anywhere else but her-cargus.com/central/lyrics-from-the-house-of-barnes).

TRIVON TURNER

should be. Underneath the ubiquitous violence and nihilistic stagnation, there's a hint to the aesthetic—it's not particularly novel to rip about a basement full of corpses—but Chris Se-Sick and Vesado Drew bring an energy and cleverness present that should give fans plenty to get excited about. Besides, if you're down with SSBC, you probably couldn't care less what this review has to say. **BB B.B.B.**

DYING FETUS



DYING FETUS
Reign Supreme

RELAPSE

Dying Fetus' seventh full-length is best described as technical deathgrind. There are the intense ten-pis and dual growled/shrieked vocals at grindcore, the maiming atmosphere, and complex arrangements of death, and the instrumental prowess of technical metal—but there's more on the menu. This is a showcase of superb musicianship. *Album Kick-off "Invert the Lids"* opens shockily with a completely gratuitous bit of sweep-picking, a technique that rears its pointy head several times in the first half of the disc, but by "From Womb to Wreck" and the Six Feet Under-esque groove of "Devout Abhority," the band leaves any weakness in its wake. Drummer Trey Williams and bassist/high vocalist Sean Beasley make for a gloriously tripper-free rhythm section, and when the band's sole original member—a guest-fellow vocalist and principal songwriter John Gallagher—channels thrashy Metallica for a searing, melodic solo oozing of '80s shred, the band's heightened technicality truly gels. **GM B.B.B.**



THE GRUESOME

The Facts and Terrifying Testament of Mason Hamilton
CRUISE EMPIRE

The Gruesome has served as the teeth for its eponymous album, con-

veying 2010's *Tales of the Coffer* (and being an international supergroup of sorts, the band further expands the expert growing tactics of ex-Death, Massacre, and Death Fetus vocalist Korn Lee and the busy-as-slinging leftist of Rogga Johansson, whose numerous dark metal projects have earned him substantial respect from the underground border). The pair's time in the trenches is evident as *The Gruesome* grooves hard on Celtic Frost/Hellhammer-inspired riffing, while Lee's morbid storytelling on "Bewards Those Who Barrow Death," "Gaze of Ghorastrophes I Had a Nightmare!" and bludgeoning opener "The Madness of Mason Hamilton" prove Lovcraft and Poe have had a lasting influence on his lyrics. Locked perfectly with the concussive churning of Rhyker Hijstam (Crypticist) and bassist John Berglund (Demigod), Lee and Johansson have channelled out yet another baroque opus. **GP B.B.B.**



RUMPELSTILTSKIN GRINDER

Grinder
CANNULIT

"Can you guess my genre of music?" That's probably what the members of Rumpelstiltskin Grinder are asking me to themselves as they unleash *Grinder* unto the presents. On this third outing, the Philadelphia foursome shows blackened death, thrash and, um, grind into its musical most grinder, and the resulting misper-inked goblet sausage is the band's shining moment. Perhaps to compensate for the diabolical moniker, the group matches the searing intensity of Gorefest and Kruzan, with blood/vocalist Shawn Riley growling from much deeper in his gut than an previous releases. The twelve tracks are intricately crafted, mean-spirited mini-bibles certifying, as guttural Rynn Mol boasts in the band's bio, "the most bone-crushing, graveyard-stomping, Frankenstein/Dracula/Wolfman hot-blooded riffage written true for." And gone artist Mike Hubevcek (Hate Eternal, Cattle Decapitation) once again captures the band's aura at grim fairy tales aptly. Don't take 'em lightly—they're probably already abducted, and corrupted the souls of your first born. **BD B.B.B.**

DAS MONSTER KIDS

GERMAN HORROR PUNKS THE OTHER LOOK TO MAKE NEW FIENDS WITH ALBUM NUMBER FIVE, THE DEVILS YOU KNOW

by GEORGE PACHECO

MOST HORROR MUSIC FANS RIGHTFULLY ACKNOWLEDGE THE MISFITS AS THE KINGS OF HORROR PUNK, but whereas so many of the genre's progeny seem content to replicate what's come before, Germany's like Other consider Glenn Danzig's original gig the bones of a much bigger sound.

"When we started out five years ago, there were only the Misfits, Samhain and Danzig," recalls frontman Fred Usher. "Most people hadn't heard of Blackie, Ghoulies and some of the other bands that were part of the first wave of new horror punk bands. At first, we were appreciated because we repeated the Misfit sound in a fashion which was unlike many other bands out there, and then we started credit for not relying on copying but adding other influences while shaping our own sound. We never wanted to stay 'old school,' we wanted to transport the original horror punk sound into a new era."

In doing so, The Other has enjoyed acclaim and success in its homeland since releasing the 2004 debut *They're Alive*. But it wasn't until fourth album *New Blood* (2009) that audiences in North America really became aware of the quartet, which also includes guitarist Serge von Block, bassist Victor Storp and drummer Dr. Caligari. Now, with the release of *The Devils You Know* (available from Steamhammer's SPV), the band is intent on making an invasion.

"*New Blood* was definitely the album that put us on the map in North America," confirms Usher. "Before that, only true horror punk fans knew about us, but now the media and gobs across have taken notice as well. I couldn't be happier about that, because it's not easy for a German band to become known in Canada and the US."

Danzig and his crew with a working formula, the group's established brand of straight-up, muscular horror punk anthems are well-preserved on *The Devils You Know*. With continues to be striking about The Other, though, is the band's innate ability to not just grab horror culture by the throat and shake influence loose from

every corner, but to roll these inspirations into well-crafted songs without sounding like they're ripping a horror movie shopping list.

While Usher acknowledges genre's greats, Universal classics, '50s monster movies and Vincent Price's oeuvre as the main blood in the vein that the band drinks from, songcraft and melody seem permanent over name-dropping. Tracks such as "Take You Down" and the thrash of "Nice Day For a Funeral" stem down the eclectic mix as vice Rock's savage guitars and Caligari's devilish double-bass drumming, while Usher's soaring pipes and sing-along choruses bring steady misanthropy to "Puppet on a String" and "Skeletons in the Closet." Another standout, "Phantom of the Opera," adapts the iconic opening melody of Andrew Lloyd Webber's musical into The Other's exclusive musical operations.

"The song is a direct homage to both Lon Chaney Sr. and the Phantom legacy," explains Usher. "The lyrics are about Chaney's ghost, who is said to still haunt Stage 26 of Universal Studios, and the guitar riff is taken from the music. We enjoy quotes and tributes because we, as horror geeks, love that kind of thing. It's like a secret communication between real fans."

In conjunction with the release of *The Devils You Know*, the band has also teamed up with Panini Comics (which previously released several comic adaptations of Stephen King stories) to produce a 40-page comic book called *The Other - Der Fluch der Koffer* (*The Curse of the Guitars*). In the story, which includes a preface written by German filmmaker Jörg Buttgereit (Wirkkowitz), Dr. Caligari brings the members of The Other back from the dead to conquer the world as rock stars if you think these ghouls have carefully cultivated a look, well, you're right, confirms Usher.

"We've refined our image and the characters in the band, maybe even more so than the Misfits ever did," he insists. "We've never really stood still, but instead worked on the sound and our appearances with lots of energy... That way we lead the pack and don't follow it."



NEW DEBUT

NOW PLAYING > DIABLO III: COLLECTOR'S EDITION, ZOMBIE BURST, PIRANHA 3DD



DIABLO III: COLLECTOR'S EDITION

PC, Mac
Blizzard

A lot of things happen in twelve years: wars, revolutions, sea changes in technology and media — the list goes on. A decade years

have passed between the release of the now-classic action-RPG *Diablo II* and this long-anticipated sequel. During those missing years, we devoted gamers' devotion every screenshot and gameplay video released, anticipated the eventual announcement of an official release date, and made sure we had the game downloaded and installed on our computers long before the clocks hit midnight (or 3 a.m. EST) on May 15, when Blizzard hit the "on" switch on their servers.

So imagine the catastrophic, mind-melting disappointment when we couldn't immediately play the game. You might be thinking you've waited more than a decade, what's a little longer? But it's the principle of the thing: *Diablo III* is a game that requires an always-on connection to Blizzard's servers. This means no internet connection, no game, not even single-player, some game for when the game's servers are down, and they were down a lot in the days following launch. It's better now, but *Diablo III* players are still randomly slowed by outages, which feels archaic in this era of instant gratification.

As for actual gameplay, *Diablo III* is great fun, though far from groundbreaking. Imagine *Diablo II* with a 2012 graphical facelift and a more engaging story and you are halfway there. The demons of Hell are up to their old invasion highlights again and you can either a Witch Doctor, Barbarian, Wizard, Demon Hunter or Monk; most join forces with Deckard Cain (from *Diablo II*) and his mopey-looking niece to defeat the evil armies and imprison their overlords in a big black cocoon. Of course, all your success only leads to betrayal, pitting you against the series' big bad, Diablo, one more time.

If you've played any of the previous titles, there's no learning curve, despite its gorgeous new 3-D environments and improved AI companions; the game still operates on a third-person, first-angle camera and utilizes frenetic mouse-clicking and a handful of keys to cast spells, launch attacks and consume health potions. While there are more quests and story "events" (only side quests) to complete, overall *Diablo III* gameplay feels simplified, from the skill tree to the gaming process used to improve weapons and armor. All told, it can be played



through in twenty to 30 hours if you're a completist, but then you're promised with doing it all over again in "Nightmare" and "Hell" modes (so much like no descriptions of their difficulty). This is where things start to get really good, though, because nothing — apart from the occasional dungeon that must be completed within a specific amount of time and maybe an end boss fight or two — will give you much trouble on "Normal."

Once again, there's the usual assortment of enemies (ghouls, monsters, skeletons, corrupted souls), sometimes in riveting mobs of 40 or 50, which occasionally results in an impressive explosion of severed appendages, but *Diablo III* is not a perfect. The horror in this game, as with previous outings, takes its cues primarily from dark fantasy art, as such, is derived from the narrative bleakness and gloomy locales and atmosphere more than from blood and guts (though

the zombie-skinning, body-pile enemies are undoubtedly pretty disgusting).

The game is most enjoyable when played in co-op mode with one to three friends — the loot is better and monsters tougher. (Though it is annoying that said friends can jump into your game at any time without permission.) Playing with a group also allows for more strategic attacks, as opposed to just button-mashing.

If you are a diehard *Diablo* devotee, you'll definitely want to pony up for the Collector's Edition, which comes complete with a hardcover book of concept art, a making-of DVD, the game's score, extra in-game bonuses for World of Warcraft players, and the coolest USB key (with *Diablo III* and its expansion on it) the side of first.

Diablo III may not quite live up to twelve years of anticipation and hype, but I predict we'll still be playing it for a long time to come.

MICHAEL S. KUEHLER



WARNING: NEAR-FLEETING CO-OP PLAY. NON-MAIN AND FULL-MONSTER MODES MAY BE THE ONLY WAY TO GET THE MOST OF THIS GAME. **WARNING:** TOO MUCH SIMPLICITY. ADVENTS ON SCREEN ARE SO CALLED "PLOT" IS A LIE.

DIABLO III: COLLECTOR'S EDITION



ZOMBIE BURST

Phone (iOS and Android)
CaféCafé Studio

Some things are simply unforgivable: stealing your best friend's partner, feasting on his or her brains... and *Zombie Burst*. This maddeningly addictive little distraction, in which you pinch the bulbous heads of the living dead before they put

the bite on you, is unforgivable because it somehow manages to mimic two of life's guilty pleasures — popping bubble wrap and, well, squeezing zits (don't bother darning it — and throws in some gorgeous Chicago-inspired scenery for good measure. The hand-down beautes — supposedly four different varieties, though you'll be hard-pressed to tell them apart in the heat of battle — make a nice change from the computer-generated variety. You start off squeezing zombie canons in a restaurant and proceed through ten more levels including a theatre, a gas station, and the Lower Wacker Drive area of Chicago, which was name-checked in *The Blues Brothers*. As an added challenge, you have to wipe zombie brains off of the screen to see what's coming at you. Somehow the increasing pace, number and leanness of the zombies keeps it all from getting dull too quickly. If you find yourself overwhelmed, you can

purchase (in app) "Mrs O'Leary's Lantern Bomb" for another \$1. And if you're still on the fence, the game makers promise to donate two percent of gross profits to charity. Unforgivable.

A.S. REIFMAN



PIRANHA 3D


Phone, Android
The Wonders Company

Quick! The movie *Piranha 3D* just hit theatres and we need a video game to enter the smartphone crowd. This had to be what the executives at The Wonders Company were thinking when they

green-lit *Piranha 3D* the game, because it's basically a rip-off of the popular *Hungry Shark* series, but less gory and much more pointless. Here, you navigate a school of piranhas in a side-scroller-like environment while tilting your phone and utilizing the touch-screen controls to eat as many fish and swimmers before your life bar runs out. You can grow your piranha school by feeding eggs, but watch out for hazards, such as jellyfish that poison you, random rocks that crush you and exploding oil barrels, which decimate your deadly fishes. For 99 cents, you get two levels ("Caves" and "Spring Break"), and for an additional buck you can purchase a third called "Water Park." Considering the movie, the app is pandering, the bloodshed is pretty tame. It's really just a lot of the red stuff floating around in the water after a kill. (You can spend another dollar to turn on some "extra gas," but it disappointingly just adds a few severed body parts.) *Piranha 3D* is absolutely devoid of anything that would give it any replay value, such as petty one-liners from the film or even a survival mode. While the tiny underwater terrors may be chewing up the box office, *Hungry Shark* continues to own the mobile waters. This imitator should have stayed on the beach.



DAVID HENRY





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REMARKS: COOL WATER-BURNING AND UNCLE STYLISH ZOMBIE KILLING.

NOTES: OCCASIONAL "HEY!" "THANKS!" "HELLO BROTHER!" ATTACKS.

REMARKS: NONE. HUNGRY ZOMBIES AREN'T DOING IT ALL BETTER.

NOTES: UNUSUAL, BUT IT IS NOT FOR BARE STAGERS.

CLASSIC CUT

BUS STOP: "I KISS YOUR SHADOW"

DIRECTED BY JOHN NEWLAND ★ USA—1962

In 1961, Federal Communications Commission (FCC) chairman Newton Minow famously damned television as a "vast wasteland." Wastelands, however, tend to host some very odd life forms.

The early 1960s saw a proliferation of prime-time TV horror with anthology shows such as *The Twilight Zone* (1959-1964) and *Thriller* (1960-1962). None other than Stephen King named the latter television's best horror series in his 1981 book *Dance Macabre*, but his pick for all-time scariest television episode is "the eerie, mounting horror" of *Bus Stop's* "I Kiss Your Shadow," which originally aired on March 25, 1962.

A dramatic anthology show of sorts set in a Colorado town, *Bus Stop* was a loose spinoff of the hit play and film (starring Marilyn Monroe) its TV incarnation turned out to be more of a genre-blender, however, and would eventually self-destruct after just one season, due to its writers' penchant for dropping unexpected elements of supernatural horror into the laps of unsuspecting viewers.

One such episode was "I Kiss Your Shadow," a story by Psycho scribe Robert Bloch about a restless and controlling woman named Donna (Joanne Linville) who gets engaged to Joe (George Grizzard), a co-worker of her brother Doug (Mfred Ryder). (It originally appeared in an anthology of the author's work titled *Pleasant Dreams*—pictured.) Joe's nervous about being emotionally suffocated but is nevertheless enthralled by Donna, whom he seemingly can't resist. When the couple is involved in a car crash that kills Donna, Joe's sanity comes into question as he insists that her shadow is haunting him—and that she's the one who pushed his sharp-tongued psychiatrist out a window, not him, as is suspected.

King's over-the-top praise aside, "I Kiss Your Shadow" (directed by John Newland—pictured) holds up as small-screen gothic, with Bloch's typical mix of sedate and sick humor intact (at one point, a somber Donna tells Joe he must speak her "very hard" whenever she's "naughty"). King remembers the episode as "wildly deviating into the supernatural," which is a bit of an overstatement, but then again, Donna's shadow could be construed as a ghostly exorcism in the style of *J-horror*, and Doug—who's eager to marry off his weird sister—gives Joe with a very odd engagement present: a copy of *The Duchess of Malfi* (see *Alimony*), a



macabre 17th-century revenge tragedy that concerns a deeply independent Duchess who becomes the victim of psychological sabotage.

Interestingly, "I Kiss Your Shadow" was the final episode of *Bus Stop*, its cancellation already insured by another issue installment, "A Lion Walks Among Us" (December 3, 1961). Whereas "Shadow" is reminiscent of the art-horror of *The Hunching and Jacob's Ladder*, "Lion" features a killer just as twisted as those in *Night of the Hunter* and *Psycho*, played by C-list teen idol Fabian. That acting brought the house of TV violence to the tipping point: US Senator John Pastore was quoted as saying, "I haven't felt clean

since [watching] 'A Lion Walks Among Us'."

By 1962, television had become a nightly national habit and, not surprisingly, like with movies and comic books, the TV industry was forced to regulate itself. Primitive demographic research at the time dictated that younger viewers wanted comedy, before the traumatic news coverage of the JFK assassination in November of 1963 cooled the tide of fictional horror on TV. By 1965, even *The Twilight Zone* and *The Outer Limits* would come to an end.

When TV self-regulated, the subject matter it previously aimed at engaged in the movies, where family dysfunction (e.g., big horror such as *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane?*), tales written by—or starring—women (*The Hunching*, *The Birds*), and anthologies (*Amicus*, *Dr. Terror's House of Horrors*) became welcome variants. Like many of the '60s movies we horror fans still buzz about (*Psycho*, *Carnival of Souls*, *Night of the Living Dead*), *Bus Stop* was stock and white, rural and blunt about madness. But it's particularly notable because it literally hit us right where we lived, when it was broadcast directly into our homes.

At a time when commercial storytelling exuded existentialism, "I Kiss Your Shadow" helped give television horror a deadly reputation. Anything that left such a mark on a young Stephen King must've been dangerous.

THOMAS A. FOSTER



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